

SPEAKING NOTES FOR
THE HONOURABLE TERRY LAKE
MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT

B.C.'s Land Based Spill Preparedness and Response Symposium

March 27, 2013

Westin Bayshore Hotel, Stanley Park Ballroom

1601 Bayshore Drive

Vancouver BC

(Disclaimer: The speech delivered by Minister Lake was based upon these speaking notes, however, also contained other points not included in these notes)

INTRODUCTION

- Good afternoon everyone.
- I would like to start out again by acknowledging we are on the traditional territory of the Coast Salish peoples.
- Once again, I would like to thank ministry staff for organizing this symposium.
- I would also like to recognize all of the wonderful presenters we had over the past three days and thank you for bringing your knowledge and expertise.
- And I would particularly like to thank all of you for participating in these worthwhile discussions and contributing your expertise and input as we move forward to our goal of a world-leading land-based spill preparedness and response regime here in B.C.
- Planning is the foundation for effective spill preparedness and response.
- By holding this symposium we are now armed with additional knowledge to continue working collaboratively to define and develop world class practices for spill preparedness and response in BC.

Symposium Outcomes

- What you have been working to accomplish over the past few days is bigger than any one project.
- The transportation of hazardous materials is increasing in B.C. as the economy and population grow.
- Regardless of whether a specific project proceeds or not, it is time for B.C. to update its spill preparedness and response regime.
- I know you all have different perspectives on what may be needed, what the costs may be, and how it should be paid for.
- Here's something we all agree on - it is in everyone's best interest to ensure B.C. is prepared to respond quickly and recover from the effects of a spill.
- A robust preparedness and response regime protects the environmental, economic and social values of our province.
- We've heard from experts in Alaska, Washington State, and California and from a variety of industry associations, First Nations and Tribal representatives,

and NGOs about different models for preparedness and response.

- I want to thank all of our speakers for their willingness to speak frankly about their systems.
- As Captain Scott Schaefer said yesterday, it can be difficult to admit what didn't go as well as planned.
- But it is through these discussions that we avoid repeating our mistakes and we continuously improve our approach.
- As with anything, the devil is in the details: the who, what and where of planning, establishing funding mechanisms, and identifying roles and responsibilities.
- I want to be clear: we are not interested in duplicating efforts, creating overlapping jurisdictions or undermining existing systems that are working well in B.C.
- What we will do is develop a world-leading spill planning and response regime that takes the best of the existing models and programs and customize an approach for B.C.'s unique geography, environment and industrial activity.
- I thought Geoff Morrison of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers said it well during his

presentation on Monday when he said, “*government should design the system to enable scalable response commensurate with the incident*”.

- To do this, we need to know what’s working.
- We also need a clear, frank assessment of gaps in our current practices.
- This includes gaps between sectors and between regulators and identifying opportunities for collaboration, between industry sectors, government, First Nations and all interested parties.
- Each of us needs to think critically about our roles and be open to talking about where we can improve.
- This is going to be challenging work.
- But it is the only way that we get to ‘world leading’.
- It is the only way that we can build a comprehensive system here that is equitable in the way it recognizes risk and responsibility and that ensures the province is prepared to respond to spills within our jurisdiction.
- What we’ve heard over the past three days is that there are a number of areas of common ground in terms of how we get there, including:

- A new planning and response model for B.C. needs to be risk based.
- The work to build it should include clearly defining what substances and sectors we are concerned with.
- It should account for both risk and consequence.
- And it should have clear accountabilities and goals for any potential new funding mechanisms.
- It will also have a strong role for First Nations.
- I mentioned at the start of my comments that we are on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish people here.
- That's not just something we acknowledge for form.
- Working with First Nations on spill preparedness, planning and response cannot be an afterthought or an obligation to be checked off a list.
- First Nations must be included as vital partners – both in acknowledgement of their historical and cultural connections to the land and in recognition of modern discussions around treaties and capacity building.
- It is simply the right thing to do.

- It's also the practical thing to do.
- Over the past three days we've heard about how important it is, in the event of a spill, to have good information about local conditions, including:
 - Geography
 - Access and logistics
 - Species of concern and sensitive areas
 - Culturally significant areas, and
 - Local response capacity
- We recognize the need to engage First Nations, and the value they bring to the conversation and we will continue to strengthen these partnerships as we work together.

Next Steps

- The next step in our process is for the working group comprised of representatives from First Nations, industry, government, and stakeholders to explore these issues in further detail.
- The working group is meeting this afternoon to discuss what they heard during the symposium.

- They will continue to meet over the next several months to develop recommendations to be considered by the Ministry.
- These recommendations will be shared publicly and we will be consulting broadly before moving forward with specific changes.

CONCLUSION

- One of the key components to successful emergency response is building strong relationships before an event occurs so the spirit of collaboration is already in place.
- We have taken a powerful step toward strengthening our response system simply by coming together over the past three days.
- In the end, we are all working towards the same goal.
- And that is to put in place a world class spill preparedness and response regime to ensure B.C.'s environment is protected.
- Through the meaningful conversations that have occurred over the past few days, and in the meetings

leading up to this symposium, we have formed a good foundation for developing policy.

- Our government believes in making decisions based on evidence, which is why we held this symposium to learn best practices from other jurisdictions and to carefully listen to the input from all participants.
- This is a process based on cooperation, collaboration, and communication and ensuring we create the systems that will foster this.
- There will be no unilateral decisions.
- And we will continue to consult as we move forward.
- I hope everyone found the last three days to be beneficial and constructive.
- I want to thank you again for taking the time to be here and for contributing your expertise as we build a world class, land-based spill regime for British Columbia.
- Thank you and safe travels everyone.

- END -