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PRIME MINISTER'S ANNOUNCEMENT AND PRESS CONFERENCE
IN BURNABY

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(APPLAUSE)

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER (Prime Minister of Canada): Merci beaucoup. Thank you very much, everybody, for that tremendous welcome, and thank you, James, for your introduction. I do want to acknowledge your hard work and determination, the role it played in today's announcement, so please, everybody, give James a hand. (APPLAUSE) Greetings of course to Premier Campbell, to Minister Falcon, to Chairman Parker and CEO Prendergast of Translink, to the President and CEO of the BC Rapid Transit Company, Doug Kelsey, to all the mayors from the surrounding area. We appreciate your presence here. And of course, to my parliamentary colleagues Alice Wang, Randy Camp and Senator Yonah Martin. We appreciate having all of you here today.

As we all know too well, the world is struggling with the worst economic crisis in generations, and while we in Canada are faring better than many countries, we are far from immune to the economic difficulties that are sweeping our globe. At the same time, there is a saying going around, and that saying is, "A crisis is a terrible thing to waste." For Canada, this crisis does represent an extraordinary opportunity, an opportunity to invest in today's

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needs and in the process to prepare our country for renewed growth and greater prosperity when the recovery comes as it inevitably will.

Le mois dernier j'ai rencontré le Premier ministre Campbell et les autres premiers ministres provinciaux afin que tous les paliers de gouvernement travaillent ensemble pour stimuler l'économie maintenant en investissant dans l'avenir.

Last month I met with Premier Campbell and the other First Ministers so that we would coordinate our efforts across all levels of government to stimulate our economy today by investing in the future. Consensus on one issue was very clear. We all want to put Canadians to work now building the bridges, roads and other public transit facilities needed to generate long-term economic growth tomorrow. (APPLAUSE) Our national economic plan does just that. From coast to coast to coast, we are working with provinces and territories to cut red tape and get projects up and running. Here in the lower mainland, we're moving forward on several ambitious infrastructure initiatives, and as our gateway to India, China and the rest of the Asia Pacific, British Columbia has a unique role to play in building the Canada of the future. That's why it's so imperative that we continue to build the infrastructure needed to speed the flow of people and goods through the Lower Mainland.

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J'ai le plaisir d'annoncer aujourd'hui un nouveau projet majeur dans les transports en commun. Notre gouvernement se joint au Premier ministre Campbell, au gouvernement de la Colombie-Britannique et à Translink pour construire la ligne Evergreen. (APPLAUDISSEMENTS) Reliant Burnaby à Coquitlam en passant par Port Moody, ce projet va créer des milliers d'emplois bien payés dans la construction, diminuer la congestion routière et favoriser une croissance future dans le Lower Mainland.

Today I'm pleased to announce in partnership with Premier Campbell, with the government of British Columbia and with Translink a major new public transit project that will help move this region and this country forward, we will build the Evergreen line. (APPLAUSE) Connecting Burnaby to Coquitlam via Port Moody, this project will create thousands of well-paying construction jobs, it will ease congestion, and it will accommodate future growth in the Lower Mainland. Now, Premier Campbell will share with you the additional details, but I want to make one thing clear, that today's announcement isn't simply about a new rapid transit link or the jobs it will create. It is about where we are headed as a country. As the world struggles with the effects of the global recession, we as Canadians are looking ahead. We are using our strong balance sheets to aggressively fund initiatives

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during this recession in communities all across the country that will generate wealth in the years to come.

Au cours des prochaines semaines, notre gouvernement va faire d'autres annonces dans le cadre de notre plan d'action économique. Notre objectif est de créer des emplois, de stimuler l'économie dans toutes les régions du pays maintenant et de s'adresser que notre pays sorte de la crise plus fort que jamais.

I would like again, once again, and I know I've done this before, but I think it's important. I would like once again to thank Premier Campbell for his leadership in partnering with us on this and other important projects to achieve real results, not just for British Columbians, for all of Canada. Premier Campbell always brings a national perspective to his role as a premier, and believe me, it is very much appreciated across this country. (APPLAUSE) Friends, by looking forward today and investing in key infrastructure like public transit, we are seizing the opportunities that will get us through these time and ensure this country emerges stronger than ever before. Merci beaucoup. Thank you. (APPLAUSE) And I'd like to call on Premier Campbell to give us some additional details. (APPLAUSE)

GORDON CAMPBELL (Premier of British Columbia):
(Speech)

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UNIDENTIFIED: (Speech)

DIMITRI SOUDAS (Press Secretary to the Prime Minister): Good morning, bon matin. So we will...hello?

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Can't hear you.

DIMITRI SOUDAS: I can't hear myself. Hello? Hello? There we go. We'll start with Rob Brown, CTV.

REPORTER: Prime Minister, re. the legislation introduced in Ottawa today, critics are pointing to the fact that mandatory minimums don't work as a deterrent, so I'm wondering first if this was the point of the legislation, to deter this kind of crime, and if you could also address BC Attorney General Wally Oppal's call today for an elimination of the two-for-one rule.

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: First of all, we know that those who have traditionally advocated soft-on-crime policies will continue to oppose this kind of legislation. It is essential for deterrence to have strong penalties that we know will be enforced, and that is why we've been moving obviously slowly in minority Parliaments, but moving as quickly as we can to get stronger penalties in place across the country that is an indispensable part of toughening the criminal justice regime in this country, so that's why we're pursuing, that's why we're proceeding the way we are. I

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suspect that, look, we know we're going to hear these critics. We know we're going to hear the opposition parrot some of these critics, because they all believe in soft-on-crime policies. I'll just say to everybody here in the Vancouver area, we got elected because we know the people of Canada want us to take a tougher stand on crime, want us to deal...want us to deal toughly with those who perpetrate these crimes. We're pursuing mandatory minimums, and we call upon the population to keep the pressure on Parliament and on the opposition to pass this legislation. In terms of the Minister's suggestion, it's certainly one of the many reforms we're looking at. Look, part of the difficulty we have in Ottawa is we are dealing with, you know, 30-40 years of criminal justice policy that has been going in the wrong direction. We have...this is a...you know, this is another first step. There are many more that have to be done to get the system turned around and we will certainly be looking at all useful suggestions from our provinces. (APPLAUSE)

DIMITRI SOUDAS: Continue with Dilbin Kang, OMNI Television.

REPORTER: Prime Minister, your cabinet minister (inaudible) Metro Vancouver capital of organized crime. What are the immediate action your government taking to tackle this problem in the lower mainland?

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RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Well, as you know, one of the bills we will be introducing in the House of Commons in the next day or two is specifically a bill to deal with some of the problems, to deal more harshly with some of the problems of organized crime and gangs. This is an important legislative step, and as I just said, I would call on the opposition to stop parroting the soft-on-crime lines and get on with passing these things. The truth of the matter is, those who say that tougher penalties on perpetrators will not work don't want them to work, because they don't believe in this kind of approach. This is an important piece of legislation. I urge Parliament to pass it. (APPLAUSE)

DIMITRI SOUDAS: Continue with Jeremy Hainsworth, Associated Press.

REPORTER: Prime Minister, a year from now we're going to have the Olympics here in Vancouver. We've seen the gang situation grow year after year after year, and even someone such as this province's Attorney General said today these, the new regulations are good, but they're not enough. What does the world have to fear when they come to visit Vancouver next year?

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Well, first of all, I think we should separate these two issues. As difficult as the criminal justice

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situation is in Vancouver and is becoming across the country, for many, many people coming from around the world, Canada is still a relatively peaceful and law-abiding country. Obviously we're going to continue, as I've just said, to continue pushing to have this minority Parliament pass some stronger legislation. That said, when people come to Vancouver, they will, notwithstanding these criminal justice problems, they can be assured that our governments will work together to make sure we have the safest and most secure gains ever. They will also see Vancouver, see the greater Vancouver area, which really is our shining jewel on the Pacific, and I'm confident that British Columbia and Canada will host a Games that are memorable to all who come from all parts of the world and all who are watching from around the world on television.

DIMITRI SOUDAS: On va continuer avec...

(APPLAUDISSEMENTS) Nous allons continuer avec Jacques Dufresne, Radio-Canada.

JOURNALISTE: Bonjour. Un peu dans la même veine – je suis ici devant vous – l'approche punitive est décriée par beaucoup d'experts dans le milieu des criminologues. Pourquoi prendre cette approche punitive plutôt que l'approche préventive?

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TR. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: On peut faire les deux.

C'est la raison pour laquelle dans notre plate-forme et dans nos efforts nous avons augmenté des fonds pour des jeunes à risque, par exemple. Mais on ne peut pas remplacer la nécessité de vraiment punir ceux et celles qui commettent des crimes violents et dangereux. Et c'est essentiel d'avoir des punitions appropriées. Je (inaudible) les soi-disons "experts" s'opposent à ces législations, ce sont les experts qui nous ont donné la situation actuelle. C'est essentiel. C'est la raison pour laquelle le public a choisi un gouvernement conservateur au lieu d'un gouvernement de coalition, un gouvernement qui va vraiment punir les crimes. C'est un élément essentiel du système, et c'est essentiel que ce parlement minoritaire agit de faire adopter ces choses que le public demande.

DIMITRI SOUDAS: Continue with Alan Dow, Reuters.

REPORTER: Some members of your office were quoted earlier this week as saying that you were worried about some of the long-term risks posed by the various economic stimulus packages being proposed around the world. Can you elaborate on what your concerns are in that area?

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Well, you know, we could get into all kinds of potential risks that exist. Obviously when governments are...and central banks are aggressively lowering interest rates

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and spending large amounts of additional money and doing large amounts of borrowing, there are risks as the economy improves that you would have inflation, that you would have crowding out of private investment. That said, and of course there's all kinds of risks of inefficient government expanded government policies that will continue into the future. That said, as I said in the United States earlier this week, as governments tackle these problems, particularly the government of the United States, they have to deal with the situation they have today. You know, the fact of the matter is, the US has an enormous structural deficit that we don't have in Canada, the government of British Columbia and other provincial governments don't have. But the reality is notwithstanding that, it is essential that our governments spend the money today, that we go into the marketplace, that we borrow funds that are not being used, that we spend and we make sure we stimulate economic activity and stop the precipitous slide of the world economy. So I'm not suggesting there aren't long-term risks, but you know, I was taught early in economics classes, the famous economist John Maynard Keyn said that at times like this, you know, we remember that in the long run, we're all dead. (LAUGHTER) So right now, we worry about the short term. We are worried about the short term, and we've got to get things right now. We don't have...I don't think in Canada we have long-term risks of inflation or crowding out because we've had better

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monetary policies, a stronger balance sheet and fiscal position. These problems may exist in the rest of the world, but I say to my fellow leaders in the rest of the world, worry about the later problems later. Let's make sure we keep this economy from spiralling downward today. That's job number one.
(APPLAUSE)

DIMITRI SOUDAS: We'll take one last question, dernière question, Manjula Dufresne, Radio-Canada...or sorry, CBC.

REPORTER: The question is about the special spending estimate of \$3 billion in the estimates today. The NDP's calling it a slush fund, and an unprecedented attack on accountability. What would you say to that?

RT. HON. STEPHEN HARPER: Well, first of all, the NDP and the Bloc Québécois in particular have adopted a totally irresponsible attitude in this Parliament. Let's remember that these are two parties who, from the night of the election on, conspired together to overturn the results of the election instead of working to make this Parliament productive. Then both of those parties decided to oppose the federal budget before they had even read it. And they said so publicly. That's the position those two parties have taken. Now they've asked us, the opposition has asked us to provide mechanisms by which we can flow funds far faster than we have been able to traditionally.

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That's why we proposed these special votes to make sure the money flows. The job of the opposition right now, to be blunt about it, the opposition has nothing positive to contribute to this economy. We've listened to them. We haven't had a single good suggestion. We put these votes before Parliament so that this money can get flowing. Their job is to stop blocking things, to make sure this money flows and make sure we get building this economy. (APPLAUSE)

Et je vais dire la même chose en français pour les médias francophones. Le NPD et le Bloc ont adopté des politiques tout à fait irresponsables dans ce parlement. Depuis le début, ils ont décidé de tenter de renverser les résultats de l'élection. Ils ont, les deux, ils ont décidé de s'opposer ou bouger, même avant le lire. Ce sont...c'est une position tout à fait irresponsable. Maintenant nous avons créé des votes dans les estimés pour faire plus vite la disponibilité de ces fonds. C'est essentiel dans cette économie. On ne veut pas...on...le public ne va pas tolérer des excuses pour le retard de l'opposition. Ils n'ont pas des choses concrètes, positives à contribuer. Ils ont une job à faire: c'est de voter pour ces fonds pour que nous puissions...pour que nous puissions stimuler l'économie canadienne d'une façon vite. C'est leur job.

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And let's be very clear about this. These are confidence measures. We are not going to mess around with this. We put this budget forward. We're working, we've got our bureaucrats working overtime to make sure we cut red tape and get this funding moving. Those votes are before Parliament so that this money gets flowing quickly. If the opposition doesn't like that, they will find themselves in an election, so I tell them get it done, get it passed, and we'll get on with stimulating this economy. (APPLAUSE)

DIMITRI SOUDAS: Great, thank you very much, everybody. Merci beaucoup.

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