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## B.C. Introduces Climate Action Legislation

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Victoria – British Columbia took a major step forward in the fight against global warming with the introduction of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act, Premier Gordon Campbell and Environment Minister Barry Penner announced today.

“This act puts into law the most aggressive greenhouse gas reduction targets in North America and makes our carbon neutral government commitment legally binding,” said Campbell. “The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act will be marked as a turning point in confronting global warming and protecting the environment for future generations.”

The act puts into law British Columbia’s target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by at least 33 per cent below 2007 levels by 2020. It also requires that realistic, economically viable interim targets for 2012 and 2016 be set by the end of 2008, and further establishes an emission reduction target of 80 per cent below 2007 levels by 2050. The government will also be required to publish a report every two years outlining the progress made towards reaching the emissions reduction targets.

The act requires the provincial government, including provincial ministries and agencies, schools, colleges, universities, health authorities and Crown corporations, to become carbon neutral by 2010 and to make public a report every

year detailing actions taken towards carbon neutrality.

“We are the first government in North America to require all public sector organizations to publicly report on their emissions levels, on the actions they have taken to reduce these levels, and their plans for continuing to minimize emissions,” said Penner, who introduced the legislation. “Our government will lead by example, first by reducing our emissions as much as possible and then offsetting the remainder.”

The carbon neutral requirements will apply starting in 2008, with respect to greenhouse gas emissions produced by government business travel by the Legislative Assembly and by provincial government ministries and agencies. Travel emissions in the last three months of 2007 will also be included, as announced by the Premier at the UBCM convention.

In 2010, the requirements will be expanded to apply to all emissions from government operations, as well as the operations of schools, colleges, universities, health authorities, Crown corporations and other public sector organizations.

To help ensure that GHG emissions reduction targets are met, next year the B.C. government will bring forward additional legislation to regulate emissions from different sectors.

Legislation will include:

- Setting up a cap-and-trade system for large emitters, which will put in place firm “caps” or limits on the quantity of emissions allowable from large sources, while providing for participation in emissions trading systems.
- Adopting California tailpipe standards for new vehicles, which will require car manufacturers’ vehicle fleets to be progressively more efficient and clean.
- Introducing a low-carbon fuel standard requiring distributors of fuels such as gasoline and diesel to reduce the carbon content of these fuels by 10 per cent by 2020.
- Providing authority for the regulation and capture of landfill gases.

“Climate change is a monumental challenge that means we have to think beyond the present and to imagine and plan for the type of future that we want the next generation of British Columbians to inherit,” said Campbell. “We are taking decisive and necessary action to confront the global warming crisis, but we’re doing it in a way that will increase our quality of life and support our economy through increased innovation and new technologies.”

