



Senate Majority News

Ron Irwin, Senate Majority Press Secretary
Room 413, State Capitol Building
Juneau, AK. 99801
Phone: (907) 465-3803

Broadcast Actualities: Available on Website
Web Site: <http://www.akrepublicans.org>

For Immediate Release: March 6, 2003

Contact: Ron Irwin, Press Secretary: 465-3803

Canadian Delegation to Visit State Capital

Lawmakers to Discuss Fisheries, Economic Development, Trade and Tourism

(Juneau) – A delegation from the British Columbia Parliament will arrive in Juneau today. They will meet with Alaska lawmakers to discuss issues such as fisheries, economic development, trade and tourism.

The four-member delegation, which includes the Minister of State for Intergovernmental Relations, The Honorable Greg Halsey-Brandt; Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, Mr. C.C. ‘Bud’ Graham; Minister Halsey-Brandt’s senior advisor on International Relations, Mr. Keith Ogilvie and Executive Assistant to Minister Halsey-Brandt, Mr. Jeff Hansen are coming to Juneau in response to an invitation extended to them by Sen. Fred Dyson (R-Eagle River).

“I extended this invitation to the Minister last fall, when I was in Vancouver for a conference,” said Dyson. “I believe these kinds of exchanges help governing bodies build on their commonalities, while at the same time, help us understand each others differences. I am honored that this delegation chose to accept my invitation.”

Dyson said that Alaska and British Columbia have always had close economic and social ties with each other and that visits like this just build on those relationships. Dyson, who visited a salmon farm during his visit to British Columbia last fall, said this delegation has particular knowledge about the efforts of the British Columbia government to tighten regulations and security around fish farms, to reduce any negative environmental impacts.

The delegation, which is only in town through Friday, will meet with a number of lawmakers and some members of the governor’s cabinet, including: Senate President Gene Therriault; Sen. John Cowdery, who chairs the Senate World Trade and State/Federal Relations committee; Rep. Cheryl Heinze, chair of the House Economic Development, International Trade and Tourism committee; Alan Austerman, the governors senior Fish Policy Advisor and Edgar Blatchford, commissioner Department of Economic Development.

“I think these kinds of exchanges and visits are extremely beneficial,” said Sen. Cowdery. “I believe it is very important to work with Canadian officials, especially when a focus can be placed on issues such as the railroad extension or gas pipeline.”

Rep. Heinze said she agrees with Sen. Cowdery. She stressed the vital trade, economic development and tourism links between Alaska and Canada and the need for a positive exchange between the two areas.

(MORE)

Page 2
Canadian Delegation
March 6, 2003

The Legislature will be hosting a reception for the Canadian delegation starting at 4:30 today in the Speaker's Chamber on the second floor of the Capitol building. During the reception Sen. Dyson and other will be presenting the delegation with an Alaska State flag and other traditional Alaskan gifts. The media is invited to the reception.

When asked if he would like to see this visit evolve into an annual exchange program, similar to the Legislative exchange program establish by former Sen. Randy Phillips and the territorial government of the Yukon, Dyson had this to say:

“We have a lot we can learn from each other,” said Dyson. “And whether it is through an annual exchange, or by some other means, my hope is that the lines of communication will remain open and strong, for the benefit of our State and the Province of British Columbia.”

###

Media Note: Photos of the reception and the presentation of the State flag will be available on our web site – www.akrepublicans.org