

Dear Colin Hansen (Minister of Finance, and Deputy Premier)

In 1981, the Provincial government removed the Provincial Sales Tax (PST) on bicycles. At the time, the Provincial Finance Minister said **"This measure will serve to encourage the use of bicycles in preference to automobiles and, I believe, is consistent with a healthier, quieter and more energy-efficient society."** The decision was ahead of its time, and has been maintained for 28 years despite several changes in government. The PST was also removed from safety equipment, such as bicycle helmets and lights.

The current Provincial government has proposed to harmonize the PST with the federal GST on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2010, and for the resulting 12% Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) to apply to bicycles and safety equipment. Some other previously exempt goods, such as books and diapers, are retaining their exemptions, so why can't bicycles? Stranger still, **gasoline is being added to the list of items exempt from sales tax** at the same time as they announced the sales tax on bicycles will more than double, both of which will hamper the Province's attempts to reduce carbon emissions and create healthier communities.

In an era of growing interest in the environment and healthy lifestyles, putting a 12% tax on bicycles and safety equipment is going in the wrong direction. I disagree with increasing taxes on bicycles and safety equipment, and I urge the Provincial government to maintain the almost three-decade exemption of Provincial sales tax on bicycles.

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