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**SPEAKING NOTES FOR
THE HONOURABLE GLEN CLARK
PREMIER OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

ANNOUNCEMENT: CHALLENGE TO THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY

**9:45 A.M.. MONDAY, JUNE 16, 1997
WATERFRONT HOTEL - BALLROOM 'B'
VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA**

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GOOD MORNING.

AS PREMIER... AND AS MINISTER FOR YOUTH... I CARE VERY MUCH ABOUT YOUNG PEOPLE IN B.C. -- ABOUT JOBS FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE... THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE... AND THEIR HEALTH.

ONE OF THE GREATEST DANGERS TO THE HEALTH OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN B.C. IS SMOKING.

EVERY DAY... 20 CHILDREN AND TEENS START TO SMOKE IN OUR PROVINCE. FOR THOSE WHO BECOME ADDICTED TO TOBACCO... HALF WILL ULTIMATELY DIE AS A RESULT OF SMOKING.

NINETY PER CENT OF PEOPLE WHO SMOKE STARTED BEFORE THE AGE OF 19. BY TARGETING KIDS... THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY BUILDS LONG-TERM CUSTOMERS AND PROFITS... AND SENTENCES OUR CHILDREN TO SHORTER... UNHEALTHIER LIVES.

SMOKING KILLED NEARLY 40,000 CANADIANS LAST YEAR. 5,800 OF THEM WERE BRITISH COLUMBIANS... AND THAT NUMBER CONTINUES TO RISE.

AND B.C. TAXPAYERS PAY ABOUT HALF A BILLION DOLLARS IN DIRECT HEALTH CARE COSTS TO TREAT THE ILLNESSES SMOKING CAUSES -- SUCH AS CANCERS, HEART DISEASE AND EMPHYSEMA.

THIS IS A TERRIBLE BURDEN... PLACED ON BRITISH COLUMBIANS... BY A MULTINATIONAL INDUSTRY THAT TAKES IN \$188 BILLION A YEAR... PEDDLING TOBACCO TO THE WORLD.

DESPITE THE INDUSTRY'S ASSERTIONS TO THE CONTRARY... GOVERNMENT... AND SOCIETY... RECOGNIZE THE CONNECTION BETWEEN TOBACCO... ILLNESS... AND DEATH.

HERE IN B.C.... WE HAVE INVESTED IN PREVENTIVE MEASURES TO HELP KIDS CHOOSE NOT TO SMOKE.

WE BELIEVE THESE MEASURES HAVE HAD SOME EFFECT.

BUT 25 PER CENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIANS CONTINUE TO SMOKE.

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MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE... AND I AM HERE TO TELL YOU OUR GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED TO DO WHATEVER IS NECESSARY TO PROTECT OUR KIDS FROM SMOKING.

TODAY... WE ARE ANNOUNCING THE FIRST STEP AMONG NEW INITIATIVES WE MUST TAKE TO PROTECT OUR KIDS FROM THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY.

THIS TIME WE'RE GOING TO THE SOURCE OF THE PROBLEM... THE INDUSTRY ITSELF.

OUR GOVERNMENT IS CALLING ON THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY TO FINALLY DO THE RIGHT THING...

TO COME FORWARD AND ADMIT IT KNOWS TOBACCO PRODUCTS ARE TOXIC AND ADDICTIVE...

TO VOLUNTARILY CONTRIBUTE TO ADDRESSING THE PROBLEMS AND COSTS BRITISH COLUMBIANS ARE SUFFERING AS A RESULT OF TOBACCO USE...

AND ABOVE ALL... TO STOP TARGETING OUR CHILDREN.

TODAY HEALTH MINISTER MACPHAIL IS SENDING AN OPEN LETTER... ISSUING THIS CHALLENGE TO THE THREE TOBACCO INDUSTRY CEOs WITH OFFICES IN CANADA...

I WILL LET HER TELL YOU MORE ABOUT THIS CHALLENGE... AND HOW IT IS PART OF A LARGER PLAN OF ACTION TO FORCE THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY TO BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR ITS ACTIONS AND ITS PRODUCTS.

I WILL ALSO LET HER TELL YOU ABOUT FURTHER STEPS WE ARE TAKING... INCLUDING THE INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION THIS AFTERNOON THAT WILL LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR LEGAL ACTION AGAINST THE INDUSTRY... SHOULD THAT PROVE NECESSARY.

TO THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY... I AM SAYING... 'IT'S TIME TO LEAVE OUR KIDS ALONE... TELL THE TRUTH... AND FINALLY BEGIN TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE HARM YOUR PRODUCTS INFLECT UPON OUR CITIZENS.'

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