

Monday, May 9, 2005

David Suzuki, Rafe Mair, and Others Back Yes Vote for STV Former Nirvana member Krist Novoselic endorses STV

Vancouver, BC -- A series of celebrity endorsements were unveiled Sunday by the Yes to STV Campaign at its rally at the Vancouver Public Library.

Environmentalist and broadcaster David Suzuki greeted the enthusiastic crowd and urged people to vote BC-STV. "For most of my life my vote has been wasted because I either voted for a candidate who didn't get elected or the party that didn't form the government," said David. With BC-STV there's no more wasted votes as you can give your first preference to the party you think is best and rank the others. David urged supporters to talk to their friends, co-workers, and explain the benefits of BC-STV.

Former UK Liberal Party leader Lord David Steel was on hand stating that in the UK, one of the last European countries to still use the antiquated first-past-the-post system, they have had the same lopsided election results where parties who receive a minority of the popular vote consistently win elections. Just recently, Tony Blair won a majority government with only 37% of the vote -- the lowest popular vote for a majority government in UK history.

Lord Steel noted that in Germany after the war, the allies set up a system of proportional representation yet the UK and US has never done the same.

Radio host Rafe Mair, also enthusiastically backed STV saying, "there will be no safe seats." As a former MLA he recalled many times were the current first-past-the-post system produced skewed and unfair results. He noted that under the current system, the power flows from the premier's office to caucus with "the consensus" passed down. With BC-STV, parties will no longer have a lock on MLAs because of competition within multi member ridings.

Krist Novoselic, former Nirvana member, also gave his endorsement of BC-STV, as did Vancouver city councillors Sam Sullivan and Fred Bass, former ICBC president Nick Geer, BC Citizens' Assembly member Shoni Field, Fair Vote Canada director Dennis Pilon, and political scientist Sabina Singh Arnott.

"By voting yes on STV, BC will fire the shot heard across the continent," said Novoselic. "The sound will carry across North America to Ottawa, Washington DC and all provincial and state capitols in between," Novoselic continued. The fact that BC is considering

STV has had a ripple effect across Canada and if BC goes STV, all of North America will take note.

Stuart Parker, former leader of the BC Green Party, addressed the crowd dispelling many of the myths detractors have been advancing. Stuart Parker's address can be found at http://www.alternatives.com/prorep/stuart_parker_may_8.html

The Master of Ceremonies was Bruce Hallsor, co-chair of the Yes Campaign. Bios for the many speakers can be found at <http://www.alternatives.com/prorep/ystv0506.pdf>

On May 17, voters in BC have the opportunity to change BC's electoral system to a system that's much better. This system was chosen by ordinary citizens, such as yourself, who made up BC's Citizens Assembly on Electoral Reform. That system is BC-STV which is proportional (reflecting the popular vote), is fairer (because all votes count), and gives strong local representation.

It is widely acknowledged that the current first-past-the-post voting system suffers from distorted -- and sometimes wildly distorted -- election outcomes, a sense of wasted votes, and "vote splitting" where there are more than two parties or candidates, ultimately discouraging voters to participate and vote. The STV system allows voters to choose more than one candidate on the ballot, ranking them in order of preference, and provides strong local representation, and outcomes that are proportional to the popular vote where all votes count toward the outcome.

For media inquiries, please contact:

Bruce Hallsor, 250-888-7846, hallsor@creaseharman.com
Julian West, 604-760-4996, westj@mala.bc.ca
Campaign Office: 1-888-YES-2-STV (888-937-2788)
Web site: <http://www.stvforbc.com>

Other information on STV can be found at:

Fair Voting BC: <http://www.fairvotingbc.com>
Citizens Assembly on Electoral Reform: <http://citizensassembly.bc.ca>
Citizens Assembly Alumni: <http://bc-stv.ca>
Chance to try before you buy: <http://bc.demochoice.org>
Understanding STV: <http://www.understandingstv.ca>
Information Office: http://www.gov.bc.ca/referendum_info