



PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**FERRY REDUCTION PLAN UNDERMINES PREMIER CLARK'S
COMMITMENT TO HEALTHY FAMILIES HEALTHY SCHOOLS
INITIATIVES**

25 NOVEMBER 2013 – Powell River Trustees are bewildered by BC Ferries' decision to cut ferry runs Saturday Evening and Sunday Morning between Powell River and Vancouver Island; the very runs that are essential to school children and community youth participating in sports and recreational activities that support healthy lifestyles. The elimination of these runs will decimate community and school sports activities in Powell River. "These cuts will make organized sport and school activities only possible for the wealthy; once again ignoring the needs of some of our most vulnerable children," says Board Vice-Chair Doug Skinner.

Premier Clark launched the Healthy Families' initiative explaining the program "is providing BC families with the tools they need to take charge of their own health". The Saturday evening and Sunday morning runs are tools our community needs to take charge of its own health.

Premier Clark should be commended for initiating Healthy Living performance standards for youth in the Province. In meeting these standards, government expects youth to "advocate for opportunities for self and others within the school and community to participate in regular physical activities in a variety of settings". The elimination of these runs makes it impossible for Powell River youth to fulfill government's expectations.

The Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development announced supports for aboriginal youth stating, "youth of Aboriginal communities have made it clear access to sports underpins their ongoing health". Elimination of these ferry runs will limit access for aboriginal youth to sports activities.

Minister Coralee Oakes, discussing the renewal of the B.C. Sports participation program, said "sport brings whole communities together, it bridges geographic and cultural gaps in a way that nothing else can quite do". We whole-heartily agree with the Minister; the proposed cuts will widen the geographic and cultural gap, weakening our community and opportunities for youth.

Joe Gallagher, CEO of the First Nations Health Society supporting the good work of the B.C Government, stated "from our children to our elders, elite sport to traditional activities, physical activity is fundamental to wellness. We support a range of local,

regional, and provincial efforts that encourage athletes and coaches to reach the highest levels of competitive sport and promote active lifestyles for the whole community”.

As illustrated, the B.C Government has been a leader in health promotion for active lifestyles for youth. The Liberals have invested millions of dollars to promote and support active lifestyles and sport for youth. These ferry cuts do not in any way align with the excellent goals of government and government’s commitment to families, youth and community..

The Powell River Board of Education is acutely aware of budget reductions, restraint and efficiencies as we have been reducing our budget for thirteen years. In fact the elimination of runs will exclude inter school and community sports teams’ ability to compete therefore reducing B.C ferries revenues even further. We understand the need for reductions and propose that BC Ferries work with our community leaders to reduce runs where it makes the most sense for our community, meets BC Ferries requirements for reductions and can support the Liberal government’s commitment to youth and healthy families.

Board of Education
School District 47 (Powell River)

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cc:

Honourable Christy Clark, Premier of British Columbia
Honourable Coralee Oakes, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development
Honourable Peter Fassbender, Minister of Education of British Columbia
Honourable Todd Stone, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure
Mike Corrigan, President & CEO, British Columbia Ferries
Teresa Rezansoff, President, BCSTA
Terry Berting, Board of Directors President, BCCPAC
Dr. W. Cunningham, President, Medical Association of BC
Deb Whitten, Board President, BC School Sports
Christine Bradstock, Executive Director, BC School Sports