

## Clinton praises B.C. carbon tax as great economic generator

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OCTOBER 18, 2008

VANCOUVER -- Gordon Campbell, the embattled Premier of British Columbia, received some big-name support yesterday afternoon for his controversial carbon tax: Bill Clinton, former president of the United States.

Mr. Clinton called Mr. Campbell's efforts to combat climate change "the greatest economic generator you could embrace."

"I know he's taken some heat," Mr. Clinton said of Mr. Campbell's critics.

Mr. Campbell's Liberal government on July 1 brought in a carbon tax on fossil fuels, starting at a couple of pennies per litre for gasoline, and rising each year. The tax applies to individuals and businesses, big and small.



The measure - part of a broader green plan that will also cap industrial greenhouse gas emissions - has received mixed reviews, particularly from the opposition New Democrat Party.

NDP Leader Carole James has hammered the government with an "axe the tax" campaign.

While many economists agree that a carbon tax makes sense as a way to curb carbon consumption, Ms. James and the NDP campaign have had success among voters, particularly in rural B.C., boosting her standing in the polls.

A provincial election is set for next May.

Mr. Clinton made his brief comment about Mr. Campbell's environmental initiatives before giving a talk to a business group with Frank Giustra, the Vancouver mining magnate and philanthropist.

Mr. Campbell gave a short introduction yesterday for Mr. Clinton and Mr. Giustra, partners in the Clinton Giustra Sustainable Growth Initiative.

The appearance by Mr. Clinton and Mr. Giustra were the highlight event at a one-day summit on corporate social responsibility organized by the Business Council of B.C.

The men spoke to upward of 1,000 people at the Vancouver Convention Centre.

Mr. Clinton's support of Mr. Campbell received strong applause from the crowd.

Mr. Clinton also praised Vancouver and its Mayor Sam Sullivan for the city's stringent green building standards.

Mr. Clinton's vice-president during his eight years in office during the 1990s was Al Gore, now the world's best-known green crusader.

Environmental policies have quickly fallen to the back burner since world economic chaos emerged.

Selling green ideas and the carbon tax will be a challenge for Mr. Campbell in the May election campaign, especially after Stéphane Dion's proposed Green Shift failed to resonate in the federal election campaign and his Liberal Party lost a quarter of its seats.

Mr. Clinton is the second prominent U.S. politician in the past month to comment on B.C. politics.

In mid-September, former New York mayor and failed Republican presidential candidate Rudy Giuliani said he opposed Insite.

Insite is a safe-injection site for hardcore drug users, located in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. It provides clean needles, medical supervision, and support to get off drugs, but not the drugs themselves.

The comments of Mr. Giuliani, known to be tough on crime, received wide attention.

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