



Neighbourhoods *for a*
Sustainable Vancouver

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MEDIA RELEASE

NSV calls local elections campaign reforms (Bills 20 and 21) a DISASTER for DEMOCRACY in Vancouver: Election cycle extended from 3 years to 4 years immediately, with no significant reforms on campaign financing

(Vancouver, March 27, 2014) Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver (NSV) is not impressed by the BC government's Local Elections Campaign Finance Act (Bill 20) and the Local Elections Statutes Amendments Act 2014 (Bill 21), both tabled yesterday.

Bill 20 pays little more than lip service to campaign finance reform and delivers no significant changes prior to the 2014 civic election. For those concerned about the corruptive influence of corporate, developer, union, and foreign political donations, this legislation is a disaster for local democracy.

According to the Province, proposed legislation is aimed at "modernizing local government elections to maximize fairness, transparency and accountability". But, while Bill 20 does nothing but delay action on campaign finance reform, a companion amendment (Bill 21) proposes to extend the election cycle from 3 years to 4 years, effective immediately. From NSV's perspective this is a reckless recipe for trouble in November 2014 and is certain to mean record-high campaign spending and less accountability, not more.

Minister responsible, Coralee Oakes noted that "this is the most significant update to BC's local elections process in 20 years" and NSV agrees. In fact, it was nearly three decades ago, in 1987, that amendments to the Municipal Act mandated a province-wide, three-year election cycle as of 1990. At the time, Civic elections were held every two years in Vancouver, and had been since 1965 (prior to which City Council was elected on an annual basis)

NSV is strongly opposed to an extended election cycle. Despite the City's support for it, there is no evidence that it has a mandate. On the contrary, public feedback to the Province's Local Government Election Task Force, in 2010, was overwhelmingly opposed to the proposal (see details at http://nsvancouver.ca/finance_reform_2014/) and there is no reason to presume that public opinion has changed.

NSV's view is that an extended election cycle would only serve to compound the influence of unlimited campaign contributions and exacerbate the profound disrespect for public opinion that is currently displayed by Vancouver's elected officials.

Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver is calling upon all citizens to demand a rewriting of proposed legislation. Contact your local MLA (contact information at <http://www.leg.bc.ca/mla/3-1-1.htm>). What we need is immediate and effective controls on campaign finance (prior to the 2014 civic election). What we don't need is an extended election cycle that will only create a better investment for unlimited special interest money.

See NSV's response to the Province's White Paper on Local Government Elections Reform here...
<http://nsvancouver.ca/nsv-submission-campaign-finance-reform/>



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Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver is a citywide grassroots network of neighbourhoods with roots going back to 2007. In the November 2011 civic election, NSV ran a mayoral candidate and four council candidates for Vancouver City Council, based on Neighbourhood-based Real Democracy, Sustainability, and Vancouver-based Solutions. A major pillar was campaign finance reform..

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Government press release (PDF):

- [Press release 26-Mar-2014 on Local Elections Campaign Finance Act, FINAL 2014CSCD0016-000351](#)

Direct links to the draft legislation:

- [Local Elections Campaign Financing Act \(Bill 20\)](#)
- [Local Elections Statutes Amendment Act, 2014 \(Bill 21\)](#)