

COALITION OF BC BUSINESSES

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Public and private services protected by BC Supreme Court ruling Court validates Coalition's position that political protest strikes are unconstitutional

Vancouver, BC (March 20, 2007) – The Coalition of BC Businesses today applauded a BC Supreme Court decision that protects public services and British Columbia businesses and residents from political protest strikes.

“Today’s decision preserves the integrity of collective agreements that must be respected without exception by the Union and the Employer,” said John Winter, Chair of the Coalition of BC Businesses. “Political protest strikes held in mid-contract violate the terms of collective agreements and lead to economic and labour instability.”

The Court’s ruling validates the position of the Coalition of BC Businesses that political protest strikes are not protected by the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and if allowed, would undermine public and private services that British Columbians depend on. The Coalition appeared before the Court as Intervenors in the judicial review hearing in November 2006.

“In the interests of BC employees, employers and taxpayers, balanced labour laws have been upheld and the delivery of both public and private services protected by the Court’s decision,” said Winter.

In its submission to the BC Supreme Court, the Coalition argued that the illegal walkouts in 2002 and 2003 (the so-called “Days of Protest”) launched by the Health Employees Union and the BC Teachers Federation should not be protected by the *Charter*.

The Coalition emphasized that strikes are an economic tool defined by the *Labour Relations Code* and are permissible only after a collective agreement has expired and the union and the employer have reached an impasse in bargaining for a new agreement.

The Coalition of BC Businesses represents the voice of over 50,000 small and medium-sized businesses in the development of British Columbia's labour and employment policies.

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