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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **B.C. PLEASED CROSS-BORDER RAIL SERVICE CAN EXPAND**

VICTORIA – The federal government’s announcement that it will help the expansion of US Amtrak passenger rail service to British Columbia is an important step towards helping boost cross-border travel and tourism, Minister of State for Intergovernmental Relations Naomi Yamamoto said today.

“The decision to move ahead for a trial seven-month period including the 2010 Winter Olympics is welcome,” said Yamamoto. “The Province is also hopeful that the popularity of this expanded service will keep it on the rails long past March 2010.”

Canada’s Public Safety Minister, Peter Van Loan, announced today that the federal government is supporting the second train service from Seattle, extending border clearance as a pilot project from August until after the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

B.C. is a longstanding supporter of a second round-trip Amtrak Cascades service to Vancouver. In June 2007, Premier Gordon Campbell and Governor Christine Gregoire of Washington jointly highlighted the benefits of more cross-border transportation options such as passenger rail trips.

“We also salute the hard work and determination shown by Council of Tourism Associations and Pacific North West Economic Region members in making this a reality,” said Yamamoto. “They are some of the key supporters helping to find smart solutions to border slowdowns and line-ups.”

“This is an exciting time for expanding the transportation options between B.C. and the US Pacific Northwest, especially in boosting cross-border tourism,” said Kevin Krueger, Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts. “The federal decision is welcome recognition of the leadership shown by B.C. and Washington State in securing a more efficient border crossing experience for the upcoming Vancouver 2010 Winter Games.”

Rail travel also reduces the number of vehicles on the roads, lowering harmful emissions and consistent with B.C.’s climate action policy, said Shirley Bond, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure.

“It’s estimated that the additional service will carry 50,000 passengers in its first full year of operation and is expected to inject \$13 million into the economy,” said Bond. “That’s why we invested almost \$3 million into upgrading railway tracks north of the U.S. border to prepare for the expansion of service.”

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