

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Huge contrast between FOI response of BC Premier and Washington Governor

**Governor's office speedy with FOI response – Premier's office, anything but**

Vancouver – Two identical FOI requests filed on the same day with the offices of Washington Governor Christine Gregoire and BC Premier Gordon Campbell got very different results.

The Freedom of Information and Privacy Association filed the requests for information about intergovernmental meetings related to the new RFID equipped drivers' licences now being phased in across the province. The licences are designed to meet the requirements of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) which will require a passport or other authorized ID to enter the United States starting June 1, 2009.

Governor Gregoire's office responded in full in less than a month. Copying costs were US \$5.30.

The Office of the Premier didn't provide their initial response until after the Washington Governor's office had sent all the requested documents. They still haven't provided any documents, but did send a bill for C \$620.

"The length of time taken by the Office of Premier to respond to FOI requests generally is an embarrassment," said FIPA Executive Director Darrell Evans. "The result of this informal test shows how bad the situation has become in this province. Congratulations to Governor Gregoire, and a big raspberry for Premier Campbell."

The BC Information and Privacy Commissioner issued a report in February of this year which slammed the government for only having a 71 percent on-time response rate. The Office of the Premier has a 31 percent on-time response rate, as calculated by the Commissioner.

The Commissioner's full report is available at [http://www.oipcbc.org/investigations/reports/F08-35580\\_Calendar\\_2008\\_Report\\_Card\(Feb\\_2009\).pdf](http://www.oipcbc.org/investigations/reports/F08-35580_Calendar_2008_Report_Card(Feb_2009).pdf)

"We will have more FOI horror stories in the days to come," Evans said. "This government's record on the issue is appalling, and the Premier's office is one of the worst offenders. Gordon Campbell should answer for what his government has done."

**Attached: Detailed timeline for the two FOI requests**

## **Timeline for the two FOI requests**

**November 25, 2008:** Requests are sent by fax to both leaders' offices.

**December 5, 2008:** First response from Governor Gregoire's office with 25 pages of documents.

**December 10, 2008:** Final batch of documents sent from Governor Gregoire's office, 63 pages total. Copying cost US\$5.30

**December 12, 2008:** First letter of acknowledgement from the Office of the Premier states 30 days required for response.

**January 12, 2009:** Office of the Premier takes another 30 days due to "the large volume of records to be searched." New target response date February 25, 2009.

**January 29, 2009:** Fee letter from OOP – Total cost estimated \$620. FIPA pays the \$310 deposit to keep the work moving, asks for public interest waiver of the fee.

**Current status:** Still waiting...