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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2007OTP0067-000650  
May 22, 2007

Office of the Premier  
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

### **PROVINCE LAUNCHES TOLL-FREE FLOOD INFORMATION LINE**

VICTORIA – The Province is partnering with the Canadian Red Cross to operate a toll-free flood information line to provide the public with up-to-date information on the flood situation throughout British Columbia, Premier Gordon Campbell announced today.

“Snowpack levels are high and in some cases at record levels, so it is important that we are prepared for the existing flood risk,” said Campbell. “This toll-free information line will give the public a reliable source for information on the flood situation in their area, and I want to thank the Canadian Red Cross Society, its volunteers and TELUS for establishing this centre well in advance of the peak spring runoff.”

The information line will be activated May 22 and will initially operate from 12 p.m. until 8 p.m. daily. The hours of operation will be extended as needed. Multi-lingual service will be available. The flood information number is 1-888-350-6070.

“Communities throughout the province are taking steps to prepare for potential flooding this spring and we want to be sure the public is kept well informed about what is happening,” said Solicitor General John Les. “This information line will provide the public with details of the current flood situation and, in the event of flooding, information on evacuations, road closures and safety precautions they can take. This complements the \$33 million for 87 flood protection projects across B.C. that we announced in April of this year.”

The call centre will be based out of the Red Cross B.C. Disaster Response Centre in Burnaby. This state-of-the-art facility holds the TELUS Red Cross Call Centre, which is capable of running 44 call lines and handling up to 10,000 calls a day. TELUS provides phone services and technical support for the centre at a reduced rate. The Province will cover costs associated with this service such as long distance charges and meals for Red Cross volunteers working the phone lines.

“Access to information is critical during disaster times,” said Susan Borthwick, regional director of the Canadian Red Cross, Lower Mainland Region. “The Canadian Red Cross is pleased to be partnering with the government to provide British Columbians with up-to-date information. The TELUS Red Cross Call Centre will help reduce the impact for communities during the flood situation throughout the province.”

Canadian Red Cross volunteers will operate phone lines at the call centre and answer questions from the public. This call centre also manages the Central Registry and Inquiry Bureau (CRIB) where evacuees can register by phone and the public can get information about family and friends if evacuations occur.

“Events like the Asian tsunami in 2004 have shown us the value of having public information lines available,” said Les. “That’s why we provided \$500,000 in 2005 to increase capacity and upgrade equipment at the Red Cross facility in Burnaby.”

The Provincial Emergency Program works year-round with local governments to prepare for emergencies. For more information on how you and your family can get prepared, visit [www.pep.bc.ca](http://www.pep.bc.ca).

For more information on the Canadian Red Cross, visit [www.redcross.ca](http://www.redcross.ca).

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