

Media Release

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Alberta Liberals commit \$800 million to Calgary Ring Road

Calgary – Kevin Taft and an Alberta Liberal government will commit \$800 million towards the construction of the South West Calgary Ring Road.

“The Stelmach Tories have been dithering on the construction of this crucial infrastructure for too long,” said Taft. “If a government isn’t meeting the basic needs of its citizens, then what on earth is it good for?”

Taft said the current government’s repeated delays on getting the ring road built are another indicator of a government that has stopped listening to its citizens.

“This is the same government that blew up a hospital in this city and has delayed for a decade on building a new one. It’s the same government that has dithered on building badly needed schools, and failed to shorten waiting times in our hospitals by training more health professionals.”

“It’s time to end the wasteful spending habits of this government. Albertans deserve a government that spends on Albertans’ priorities.”

Funding for the Calgary Ring Road was included in the costing announcement the Alberta Liberals made last Friday. It falls within the Alberta Liberal plan for partnering more closely with cities, and giving them access to secure and predictable funding for major infrastructure.

“The Alberta Liberals are committed to doing public business in public,” said Taft. “The Tories will carry on in their typical way of making deals behind closed doors, then bringing spending decisions to the Legislature after the fact.”

“This is unacceptable. Even poker players have their chips on the table. The Alberta Liberals will be accountable to Albertans by making major decisions in public, and by properly resourcing those decisions.”

Taft said the Alberta Liberals will work closely with the Tsuu T’ina Nation to reach agreement on using the Nation’s land for a portion of the ring road.

“We will be approaching this discussion in good faith, and with an understanding of the importance of this land to the Tsuu T’ina Nation. The Alberta Liberal Party is committed to reaching an agreement that benefits everyone. We’re going to proceed with respect and equity.”

“Resourcing this priority is a demonstration that we’re serious about getting a ring road built.”

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As described in Friday's platform costing announcement by the Alberta Liberals, the \$800 million will come from the Sustainability Fund, which was originally intended as a \$2.5 billion contingency fund in case of a natural disaster or other emergency. The Tories have been using the Sustainability Fund as a convenient way to stash extra surplus dollars outside of proper legislative control, and it now stands at \$7.7 billion.

"The higher price to pay here is in *not* acting," said Taft. "The real cost is in the untold hours that Calgarians will spend locked in traffic, when they could be at home with their families, or at work contributing to the economy. The cost is also in rising greenhouse gas emissions as hundreds of cars sit idle in traffic."

"The Alberta Liberals have a plan that will get the job done right for a change. We're ready to get to work on addressing Albertans' needs and priorities."

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