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TransLink legislation: Falcon power grab to end local control New TransLink a 'gift' to liberal friends and insiders

Vancouver, BC – A controversial bill proposed by the Campbell government is a power grab designed to wrench authority over transit and transportation services in the Lower Mainland from local governments and hand it over to a group of Liberal friends and insiders, charges a coalition of unions in the transportation sector.

Bill 43, the **Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority Amendment Act**, is in second reading today and is expected to be hotly debated.

“It’s been apparent through the past year that Transportation Minister, Kevin Falcon’s ultimate goal is to take local input and control out of transportation and to install a hand-picked board that will enact a Liberal agenda with no questions asked,” says Jim Sinclair, President of the B.C. Federation of Labour.

“Despite Falcon’s claims of greater accountability, **Bill 43** is full of loopholes and bureaucratic dead ends that are intended to sever any effective input from local government or transit users,” Sinclair adds.

“The result? Transit services face wholesale privatization and the cost to transit users and local taxpayers will escalate dramatically,” predicts Sinclair.

Falcon’s new Act is largely similar to **Bill 36** which was introduced last spring. It will replace the current TransLink board – which is made up of elected local politicians who hold open meetings – with a board of directors composed of individuals nominated by groups like the Board of Trade, with ties to the Liberals. And it proposes new funding arrangements that will put more of an economic burden on local taxpayers and transit users through higher fares to pay for future transportation improvements.

Among the new additions to the new **Bill** are sweeping powers given the new transportation authority to act as a real estate developer in Lower Mainland municipalities.

Sinclair said that unions, including the Canadian Auto Workers, Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union Local 378, and Canadian Union of Public Employees will continue to work with municipalities, transit users, and community groups to ensure that transit and transportation management in the Lower Mainland remains democratic, open, and accountable.

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For more information contact Jessie Uppal, B.C. Federation of Labour 604-430-1421.

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