



ELECTIONS BC

A non-partisan Office of the Legislature

Report of the Chief Electoral Officer
on the 2011 HST (Harmonized Sales Tax) Referendum

June 13–August 26, 2011

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ISBN 978-0-7726-6534-8

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November 15, 2011

The Honourable Bill Barisoff
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
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Honourable Speaker:

I have the honour to submit the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the 2011 HST
(Harmonized Sales Tax) Referendum.

Respectfully submitted,

Keith Archer, Ph.D.
Chief Electoral Officer
British Columbia



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Overview

Summary

This report describes the proceedings, results and costs of administering the 2011 HST (Harmonized Sales Tax) Referendum. The 2011 HST Referendum was the first referendum conducted entirely by mail since the 2002 Treaty Negotiations Referendum and was conducted pursuant to the *Referendum Act* and the HST Referendum Regulation.

The initial mailing of voting packages to all registered voters commenced on June 13, 2011, but was halted on June 14 due to a lockout at Canada Post. Upon conclusion of the work stoppage, the initial mailing of voting packages resumed on June 28, 2011 and continued until July 7, 2011. As a result of the disruption of postal services, to ensure the integrity of the referendum, the Chief Electoral Officer¹ issued an Order to extend the timeline of the event by an equal number of days as were lost by the lockout. Consequently, for voters who were not yet registered or who were registered but did not receive a voting package, the deadline for requesting a package was extended from July 8 to July 22 by Order of the Chief Electoral Officer. Similarly, the deadline to submit ballot packages² to Elections BC was extended from July 22 to August 5.

A total of 3,063,170 voting packages were issued. 1,653,528 ballot packages were returned to Elections BC, either directly or at a Service BC Centre, by 4:30 p.m., August 5, 2011. 38,294 ballot packages received by the deadline were not considered for counting because they did not meet the requirements of the HST Referendum Regulation. An additional 2,132 ballot packages met the requirements for counting, but were resealed because the certification envelope either did not contain a secrecy envelope or ballot, or contained more than one secrecy envelope or ballot. Of the 1,613,102 ballots considered, the majority of validly cast votes were in favour of the question on the ballot. Pursuant to section 4 of the *Referendum Act*, the results of the referendum are binding on the government that initiated the referendum.

Elections BC incurred costs of \$8,067,395 to administer the 2011 HST Referendum.

¹ An Acting Chief Electoral Officer held office during referendum planning and implementation activities until August 31, 2011. Keith Archer, Ph.D. was appointed Chief Electoral Officer on September 1, 2011 and held office through the remainder of the referendum proceedings. For clarity, all references in this report will be to the title of Chief Electoral Officer.

² 'Voting package' is the term for the voting material mailed by Elections BC to registered voters and 'ballot package' is used to refer to the ballot and certification envelope returned to Elections BC by registered voters.

Statistics at a glance

The following table contains statistics relevant to the 2011 HST Referendum.

Table 1: Statistics at a glance

Voter registration and turnout	
Registered voters at initial mail-out	3,049,229
Net increase to voters list during package request period	13,941
Total registered voters at the close of the period for requesting a voting package	3,063,170
Total ballot packages returned	1,653,528
Percentage of ballot packages returned	53.98%
Total number of ballot packages not considered	38,294
Total number of ballots considered (registered voters who voted)	1,613,102 ³
Percentage of registered voters who voted	52.66%
Total estimated eligible voters	3,264,381
Estimated turnout by eligible voters	49.42%
Results	
Total ballots considered	1,613,102
Rejected ballots	2,977
Percentage rejected ballots	0.18%
Total valid votes	1,610,125
Percentage valid votes	99.82%
Total Yes votes	881,198
Percentage valid votes voting Yes	54.73%
Total No votes	728,927
Percentage valid votes voting No	45.27%
Officials and additional ballot package return opportunities	
Referendum officials	165
Elections BC Collection Centres and Elections BC headquarters	6
Service BC Centres	60

³ 1,615,234 ballot packages were eligible to be considered, however 2,132 ballot packages contained certification envelopes with either two ballots or no ballot, therefore 1,613,102 ballots were considered.

Legislative framework

On September 13, 2010, the Select Standing Committee on Legislative Initiatives referred the successful HST initiative petition and draft Bill to the Chief Electoral Officer to conduct an initiative vote on September 24, 2011 under the *Recall and Initiative Act*⁴. On March 25, 2011, government announced that it intended to cancel the HST initiative vote and hold a referendum on the HST under the *Referendum Act* instead. The referendum was officially initiated on April 7, 2011 when the HST Referendum Regulation was made, directing the Chief Electoral Officer to conduct a referendum on the HST by mail-in ballot between June 13 and July 22, 2011.

On April 27, 2011, Bill 4, *Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) Initiative Vote and Referendum Act* was introduced and on June 2, 2011 it received Royal Assent and the Act came into law. This Act removed the requirement for the Chief Electoral Officer to conduct the HST initiative vote on September 24, 2011 as required by the *Recall and Initiative Act*. Without this new Act, the Chief Electoral Officer would have been required to conduct both the referendum on the HST under the *Referendum Act* during the summer and the initiative vote on the HST under the *Recall and Initiative Act* in September.

While an initiative vote and referendum are similar in some ways, there are some significant differences between the two types of votes.

Table 2: Differences between referenda and initiative votes

	Referendum	Initiative Vote
Legislation governing vote	<i>Referendum Act</i>	<i>Recall and Initiative Act</i>
Source of subject to be voted on	Government	The proponent of a successful initiative petition
Frequency	On any date selected by government	Last Saturday in September, every three years (e.g. September 27, 2014)
Threshold for success	One threshold: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A simple majority of votes cast (50%+1) 	Two thresholds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 50% of all registered voters, province-wide, vote in favour; and More than 50% of all registered voters in each of at least 2/3 of the electoral districts (57 districts) vote in favour
Authorized participants and financing rules	Determined by Regulation	Proponent and opponent selection process and financing and advertising rules established in legislation

⁴ For more information regarding the HST initiative petition see the Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the Initiative Petition “An initiative to end the harmonized sales tax (HST)” available on the Elections BC website.

The HST Referendum Regulation specified the referendum question, established that all registered voters were entitled to vote in the referendum, and that the referendum would be conducted by mail-in ballot. The question was originally drafted by the Chief Electoral Officer for use in the initiative vote to represent the intent of the draft Bill for the HST initiative petition. The question was then adopted for the referendum in the HST Referendum Regulation. The referendum question was:

Are you in favour of extinguishing the HST (Harmonized Sales Tax) and reinstating the PST (Provincial Sales Tax) in conjunction with the GST (Goods and Services Tax)?

Figure 1: 2011 HST Referendum ballot

1. Mark an **X** or **✓** in **ONE** of the two circles next to the question.

Are you in favour of extinguishing the HST (Harmonized Sales Tax) and reinstating the PST (Provincial Sales Tax) in conjunction with the GST (Goods and Services Tax)?

Yes

No

The HST Referendum Regulation did not establish a framework for “Yes” and “No” groups to campaign for the two responses to the ballot question. Instead, government appointed Stephen Owen, Q.C. as the Referendum Funding Decision Maker (RFDM). The RFDM was responsible for determining which groups or organizations would receive public funds to advocate for the two responses to the ballot question and for the distribution and management of the funds. Elections BC did not administer, oversee or otherwise monitor the activities (financial or otherwise) of the “Yes” and “No” advocacy groups.

The RFDM selected Fight HST Society as the proponent for the “Yes” response and Smart Tax Alliance as the proponent for the “No” response.

Calendar of events

The calendar of events for the referendum was in part prescribed by the HST Referendum Regulation. The Regulation prescribed the date when voting packages were to begin being distributed, the last day on which a voting package could be requested, and the date and time for the close of voting. The period of time for counting and the reporting of results were not legislated.

Table 3: Referendum calendar (planned)

Milestone	Date
Government announces HST referendum	March 25, 2011
HST Referendum Regulation deposited	April 7, 2011
Voting package initial mail-out begins	June 13, 2011
Voting package initial mail-out concludes	June 24, 2011
Ballot package processing and verification begin	June 24, 2011
Period for requesting a voting package ends	July 8, 2011
Deadline for returning a voting package	July 22, 2011
Ballot counting period begins	August 12, 2011
Verification survey ends	August 19, 2011
Ballot counting and verification ends; results announced	August 25, 2011

A significant concern to Elections BC in the weeks leading up to the start of the mail-in referendum was a potential strike by Canada Post workers. Rotating strikes began on June 2, 2011 but had no impact on the conduct of the referendum. However, on June 14, a nation-wide lockout was imposed by Canada Post and lasted until back-to-work legislation passed by the federal Parliament came into force on June 27. During the work stoppage Elections BC continued to produce voting packages to minimize any delay in getting the packages to voters once Canada Post service resumed. By the end of the work stoppage, all voting packages had been produced, were in secure storage with Canada Post, and were ready to be mailed.

Prior to the work stoppage, voting packages were delivered in 14 of 85 electoral districts and some voting packages for other electoral districts were in the mail system. Voting packages that were in the mail system during the stoppage were securely stored until postal service resumed. Service BC Centres and Elections BC Collection Centres were open throughout the work stoppage for voters who had received their voting package to return their ballot package.

Upon the resumption of postal service on June 27, the Chief Electoral Officer announced that he would use the authority granted to him under the HST Referendum Regulation to make an Order extending the deadline for requesting a voting package from July 8 to July 22, 2011 and extending the deadline for the close of voting from July 22 to August 5, 2011.

Table 4: Referendum calendar (actual)

Milestone	Date
Government announces HST referendum	March 25, 2011
HST Referendum Regulation deposited	April 7, 2011
Voting package initial mail-out begins	June 13, 2011
Voting package initial mail-out concludes	July 7, 2011
Ballot package processing and verification begin	June 28, 2011
Period for requesting a voting package ends	July 22, 2011
Deadline for returning a voting package; ballot counting begins	August 5, 2011
Verification survey ends	August 25, 2011
Ballot counting and verification end and results announced	August 26, 2011

All subsequent references in this report to the deadline for requesting a voting package and for returning a ballot package are to the amended dates made by the Order of the Chief Electoral Officer.

Voter registration

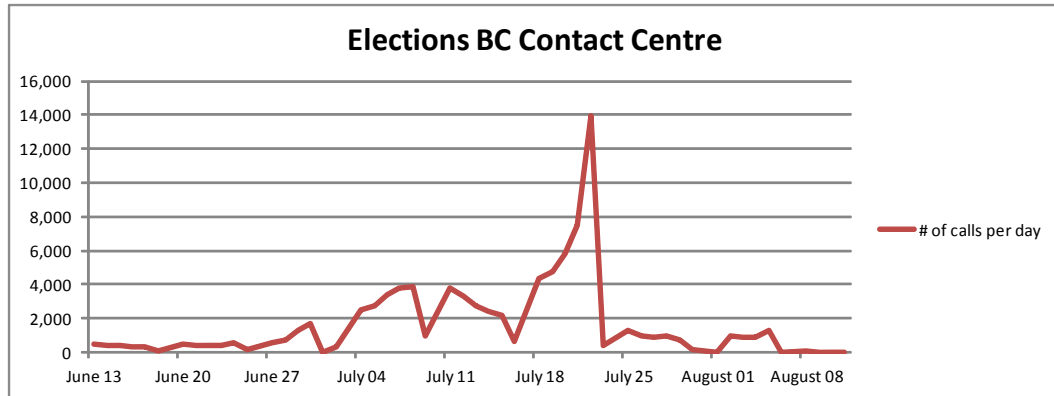
All individuals who were registered provincial voters in B.C. were entitled to vote in the referendum, including those individuals who became registered voters prior to the deadline for requesting a voting package. There were no additional eligibility criteria under the HST Referendum Regulation. If a voter was not registered, they could contact Elections BC during the voting package request period, and register to vote and request a voting package. Elections BC staffed a Contact Centre throughout this period to enable voters who were not registered to participate in the referendum. Voters could also update their voter information with Elections BC by using the form on the back of the certification envelope in their voting package. Those updates were incorporated into the provincial voters list after the referendum.

In the weeks leading up to the initial mail-out, Elections BC spent a great deal of effort in ensuring the voters list was of the highest quality possible. Elections BC received some voter registration updates from Elections Canada as a result of the May 2, 2011 federal general election and was able to incorporate these updates into the provincial voters list. Unfortunately, the majority of voter registration updates from the federal election were not available to Elections BC prior to the referendum mail-out. Advertisements that advised voters of the upcoming referendum also reminded voters to update their voter registration information if they had recently moved. All of these activities were conducted to enable as many voters as possible to receive their voting package in the initial mail-out.

Voters who knew they would be away from their ordinary place of residence during the referendum period were able to contact Elections BC and provide an alternate mailing address. This enabled voters who were out of the province or country, or otherwise away from their ordinary residence, to receive their voting package and cast their ballot.

Contact Centre operators were available six days a week throughout the referendum period to assist voters. Operators were available an extra two hours on July 21 and until midnight on July 22, the last day for requesting a voting package. The operators received 90,132 phone calls during the referendum period with the highest volume of calls coming in the days prior to the end of the period for requesting a voting package.

Figure 2: Contact centre call volumes



Between June 1 and the end of the period for requesting a voting package (July 22), 13,941 new voters had registered to vote. 19,660 voters updated their registration information by the end of the period for requesting a voting package and additional updates were received on the certification envelopes returned by voters.

Table 5: Number of registered voters in British Columbia

	Date	Registered voters
Start of initial mail-out	June 13, 2011	3,049,229
End of voting package request period	July 22, 2011	3,063,170

Table 6: Number of voter registration updates

	Date	Updates to existing registrations
Prior to initial mail-out	June 1-12, 2011	786
Initial mail-out to close of voting package request period	June 13 - July 22, 2011	18,874

Voting

Voting package

A voting package consisted of a ballot, secrecy envelope, certification envelope, return envelope and instructions for marking the ballot and returning the ballot package to Elections BC. All of these elements were mailed to the voter inside a larger envelope.

Figure 3: Voting package



The ballot was attached to the instruction sheet. In order to vote and return the ballot to Elections BC, the voter was instructed to mark their ballot and remove it from the instruction sheet along the perforated line. The ballot was to be placed in the secrecy envelope (A), which was then sealed and placed inside the certification envelope (B). The voter then completed the certification envelope and placed the certification envelope into the postage-paid return envelope (C). Collectively, this material used to return the ballot to Elections BC was referred to as the ballot package.

Because the certification envelope was preprinted with information identifying the voter (name and address), the secrecy envelope was used to maintain the secrecy of the ballot. After the certification envelope was opened, the secrecy envelope inside was mixed with the secrecy envelopes from the other returned certification envelopes from that electoral district to preserve the anonymity of the voter. This ensured that when the secrecy envelope was opened, the ballot inside could not be traced back to the voter who cast it.

Figure 4: Referendum instructions

**HST Referendum Voting Package
Ballot and Instructions**

It is important to follow each step on the other side of this instruction sheet.

You **MUST** sign and enter your birthdate on the Certification Envelope (B) for your ballot to be accepted.

Please provide your phone number. It is an important part of the process. You may be called by Elections BC to confirm that you voted.

You may ask someone to help you with this voting package. This person may only help one voter and their name must be included in the space provided on the Certification Envelope (B).

If needed, a replacement package may be requested before midnight (local time) on Friday, July 8, 2011. Call Elections BC at **1-800-661-8683** (toll-free).

HST Referendum Voting Packages are provided in English. Translations of the materials are available on the Elections BC website (www.elections.bc.ca) in the following languages: Arabic, Chinese-Simplified, Chinese-Traditional, Farsi, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese.


Ballot packages must be **received** by Elections BC, a Service BC Centre or an Elections BC Collection Centre **before 4:30 p.m. on Friday, July 22, 2011**. Ballot packages received after 4:30 p.m. on Friday, July 22, 2011 will NOT be counted. Locations are listed on the Elections BC website at www.elections.bc.ca or by calling **1-800-661-8683** (toll-free).

Be aware, it is an offence under the *Election Act* and HST Referendum Regulation to:

- vote more than once
- obtain a ballot in someone else's name
- make a false or misleading declaration
- persuade or compel someone to vote, how to vote, or prevent others from voting

Penalties on conviction of an offence are punishable by a fine up to \$20,000 and/or imprisonment not longer than two years.

For more information, contact:

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www.elections.bc.ca

In order to control the issuance of ballots and reduce the risk of fraudulent voting, a unique voting package was created for each registered voter and all voting packages were issued by Elections BC headquarters. This meant that voters could not obtain a ballot from Elections BC Collection Centres or Service BC Centres, which were established for mail drop only.

The front of the certification envelope was preprinted with the voter's name and residential address. Preprinting this information reduced the amount of work required for the voter, but more importantly, it allowed Elections BC to ensure that the voting package was used only by the voter to whom it was issued. If the preprinted name and address on the certification envelope was crossed out and another voter's name and address hand-written in, referendum officials knew that it was not likely completed by the voter to whom it was issued, and it was examined closely to determine whether it met the requirements of the Regulation. A certification envelope that was not completed by the voter to whom it was issued did not meet the requirements of the Regulation and therefore could not be considered for counting.

Initial mail-out

Elections BC began the initial mail-out to registered voters on June 13. This initial mail-out consisted of mailing a voting package to each registered voter on the provincial voters list. The plan called for the mail-out to take place over ten business days.

The province was initially divided into two regions based on estimated delivery schedules. Voting packages mailed to communities in northern British Columbia, the Interior and Vancouver Island were given to Canada Post for delivery in the first week, followed by the Lower Mainland in the second week. This staggered approach was to take into account the lengths of time it takes for mail to reach different parts of the province, and meant that all voters would have approximately the same amount of time in order to mark and return their ballot.

However, only the voting packages for 14 electoral districts in the North and the Interior were delivered prior to a Canada Post work stoppage. The remainder of the 3,049,229 voting packages were delivered June 27–July 7, once mail delivery resumed. As all the voting packages were prepared prior to the work stoppage, they still contained the original dates for requesting a voting package and returning a ballot package.

Requesting a voting package

Voters who were not registered prior to the initial mail-out were able to call Elections BC and register to vote and request a voting package up until the July 22 midnight deadline. 13,941 new voters requested a voting package by the deadline.

The online voter registration system on the Elections BC website was turned off during the referendum period because it could not be updated in time to handle the complexity of the voting package resend process without introducing risk that requests for voting packages would not be processed in time.

Voters who thought they were registered but did not receive a package were able to call Elections BC and find out whether or not they were in fact registered, whether a voting package had been sent to them, and to what address it had been mailed. In many cases the voter no longer resided at that address. In these instances, the original voting package was flagged as cancelled in the voting package tracking system, the voter's address was updated by the contact centre operator, and a replacement package was issued to the voter's current mailing address. Replacement packages had "Replacement package" printed on the outer envelope and the certification envelope to help voters differentiate them from the original package.

The voting package tracking system was developed to track whether a voting package had been mailed to a voter and whether the returned ballot package had been received by Elections BC. It enabled Elections BC to issue replacement voting packages to voters who spoiled their ballot or did not receive the voting package initially issued to them. It helped prevent multiple voting, as in the event that a replacement package was required, a previously issued voting package could be cancelled and identified as such if that package was returned to Elections BC. This meant that only one voting package was "active" for a voter at any time. If a package flagged as cancelled in the tracking system was returned to Elections BC, it was not opened and the ballot inside was not considered.

Figure 5: Voting package tracking system

Barcode	Last Name	Given Names	Package Status-Reason	Package Status Date	Package Status Userid	Certification Envelope Status-Reason
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Voters who spoiled their ballot were entitled to request a replacement voting package. When this occurred, the original voting package was flagged as cancelled in the tracking system and the voter was advised to destroy the original voting package and not return it to Elections BC.

Ballot templates were available on request to assist voters who are visually impaired to mark their ballot independently. Twenty-four voters requested and were provided with a ballot template.

A voter who was unable to vote or request a voting package because of a physical disability or difficulty with reading or writing was permitted to be assisted by another individual of their choice. A voter was also permitted to be assisted by an individual who could translate the ballot and voting instructions for them. An individual who assisted the voter was required to preserve the secrecy of the ballot, mark it in accordance with the directions of the voter and not attempt to influence the voter as to how they should vote. Voting instructions in 16 languages were available on the Elections BC website.

Throughout the referendum period Elections BC made every effort to ensure that voters who had requested voting packages received them. This included delivery to alternate addresses, use of expedited delivery where necessary, and in the case of B.C. voters on patrol in the Pacific Ocean aboard HMCS Ottawa, arranging for voting packages to be shipped to and returned from Darwin, Australia.

Returning a voting package

A ballot package had to be received by Elections BC or a Service BC Centre by the close of voting at 4:30 p.m. on August 5, 2011 in order to be considered for counting. To ensure that the maximum number of validly returned ballot packages could be accepted for counting, Elections BC arranged to physically receive all ballot packages that had been received by the main Canada Post reception facility in Vancouver by the deadline. This decision eliminated the risk of ballot packages being received by Canada Post but not transferred to Elections BC prior to the deadline. It served to significantly reduce the percentage of late packages received by Elections BC compared to the 2002 mail-based referendum.

Figure 6: Returned ballot packages



The return envelope provided was a pre-addressed postage-paid envelope, meaning that voters did not need to use a stamp if it was being returned from within Canada. Voters who mailed their ballot from outside of Canada were responsible for their own postage and ensuring their package was received by Elections BC prior to the deadline.

In addition to the option of mailing their ballot package back to Elections BC, voters were also entitled to return their package to one of the 60 Service BC Centres located throughout the province. This enabled voters to drop off their voting package until the close of voting.

Figure 7: Service BC Centre, Merritt



As there are no Service BC Centres in the Metro Vancouver area, Elections BC also established collection centres at five shopping centres in that region where voters could drop off their ballot packages during shopping hours.

Table 7: Elections BC Collection Centres

Collection Centre	Location
Capilano Mall	North Vancouver
City Square Shopping Centre	Vancouver
Lougheed Town Centre	Burnaby
Semiamhoo Shopping Centre	Surrey
Willowbrook Shopping Centre	Langley

Figure 8: Elections BC Collection Centre, City Square Shopping Centre



Voters could also drop off their ballot package at Elections BC headquarters in Victoria.

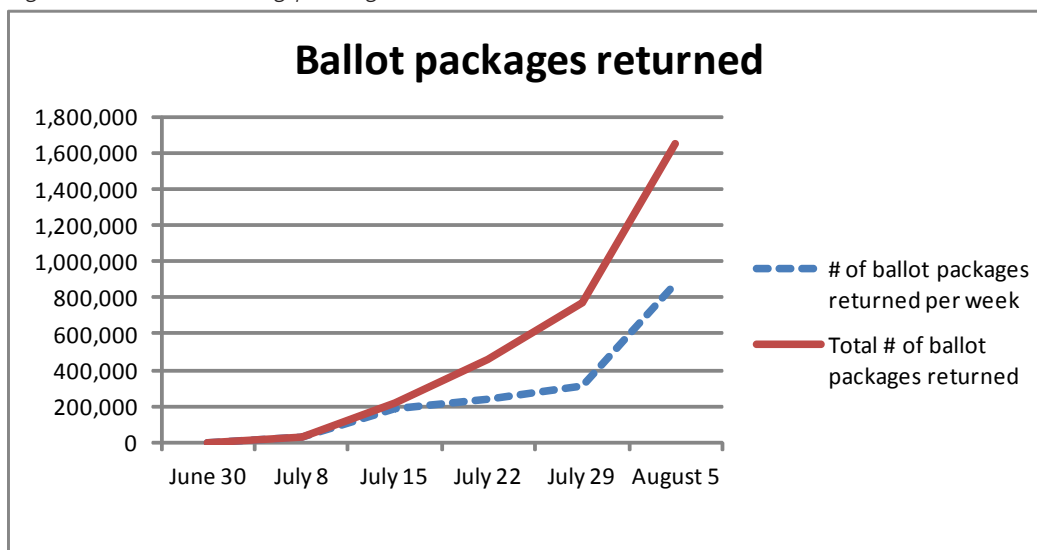
Voting packages that were reported as undeliverable by Canada Post were returned to Elections BC separately and the voting package tracking system was updated with this information. This enabled contact centre operators who received phone calls from voters who did not receive a voting package to advise voters of this fact and work with the voter to identify a suitable mailing address.

Counting and verification

Before a ballot package returned to Elections BC could be opened and the ballot counted, referendum officials reviewed the ballot package and confirmed that it was returned by the voter to whom it was issued and that the package had been completed as required by the HST Referendum Regulation. This review of the ballot packages began on June 28 and continued until August 25.

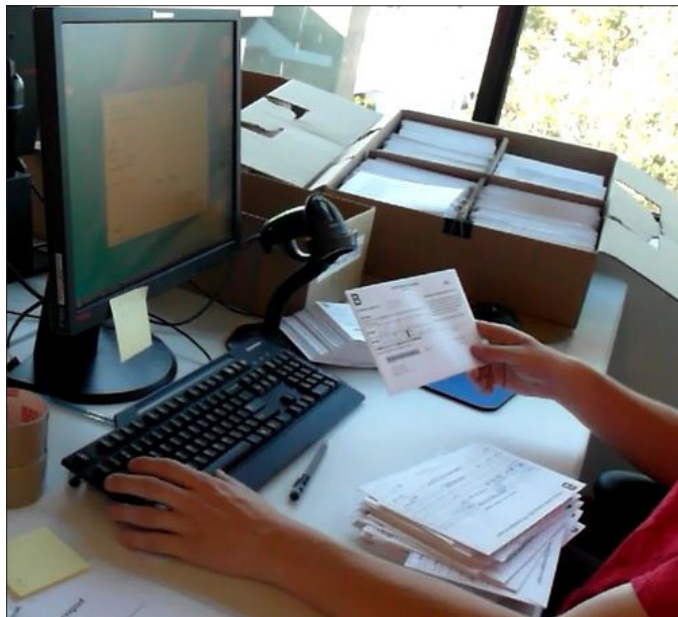
1,653,528 ballot packages were returned to Elections BC between June 28 and the August 5, 2011 deadline. Ballot packages received by Elections BC after 4:30 p.m. on August 5 were not considered for counting.

Figure 9: Return of voting packages



As part of the review, referendum officials opened the return envelope, removed the certification envelope and assessed it to ensure that the voter’s name, residential address, birthdate and signature were included on it, as required by the HST Referendum Regulation. The voter’s name and residential address were preprinted on the certification envelope, but the voter was required to write their birthdate and sign a declaration. The declaration stated that they were a registered voter, had not previously voted in the referendum and would not vote again. Certification envelopes that did not contain this information, and ballot packages that were returned without a certification envelope, were not opened or otherwise considered further.

Figure 10: Certification envelope review



The birthdate acted as a 'shared secret' that Elections BC used to confirm the package was used by the appropriate voter. If the birthdate written on the envelope did not match the birthdate on the individual's voter record with Elections BC, the referendum official could not be certain that the individual who returned the envelope was the individual to whom it was issued.

Elections BC went to significant effort to match the voter's written birthdate with the voter record and mitigate where possible, the impact of a voter making a transposition error when writing down their birthdate. Recognizing that it was possible that Elections BC could have had an incorrect birthdate in a voter record, Elections BC also matched what was written on the certification envelope with birthdates available from Elections Canada and the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC)⁵. In those cases where no matches were found, or it was impossible to determine with certainty that a voter had made a transposition error, the certification envelope was set aside.

Referendum officials also ensured that only one ballot package had been returned by a voter. If a replacement package had been issued to a voter, only the most recently issued voting package could be accepted, as any previous packages had been cancelled in the tracking system. In the event that more than one voting package was returned by a voter, only one package was considered and all others were set aside for investigation of potential multiple voting.

⁵ Records from these two organizations are the main sources for updating the provincial voters list and their use for such purposes is permitted under the *Election Act*.

During the voting package review and counting process, Elections BC identified instances where it appeared an individual returned more than one ballot package. Elections BC continues to investigate these matters.

Figure 11: Ballot counting



All certification envelopes received prior to the close of voting and completed as required by the HST Referendum Regulation were opened after the close of voting.

After separating the ballots from the secrecy envelopes in which they were held, ballots were counted by pairs of referendum officials utilizing the same system of checks and balances used when counting ballots in a general election.

Elections BC hired 165 referendum officials to review the certification envelopes and count ballots. These officials were supported by an additional 53 permanent and temporary Elections BC staff members who were also appointed as referendum officials during the counting process in order to complete the counting of the ballots in a timely manner.

Verification survey

In addition to using the birthdate provided by the voter to confirm that the voting package was used by the voter to whom it was mailed, Elections BC also contacted a random sample of voters who submitted referendum ballot packages to gauge the rate at which voters would confirm their participation in the referendum.

In a process similar to the one used for the 2010 initiative petition verification, Elections BC contracted with BC Stats to phone a large sample of randomly-identified voters between July 19 and August 22. BC Stats randomly selected 6,035 certification envelopes from those that were accepted for counting (71 from each electoral district) as the sample set. The individuals who were contacted were asked to confirm that they did vote in the referendum.

BC Stats interviewed 4,871 voters, over 80% of the total sample. Of those who responded, 99.70%⁶ confirmed their participation in the referendum, a rate of confirmation identical to that of the HST initiative petition. This high rate of confirmation from a large sample representing all electoral districts allowed the Chief Electoral Officer to be sufficiently confident that the individuals who submitted referendum ballot packages were in fact the registered voters to whom the packages were originally issued⁷.

Observers

The HST Referendum Regulation allowed the Chief Electoral Officer to authorize observers to be present during the counting proceedings, including the screening of certification envelopes and the actual counting of referendum ballots. To ensure transparency and procedural fairness, the Chief Electoral Officer authorized the proponents for the “Yes” and “No” sides, and representatives of the Government and Opposition caucuses, to each have up to two observers at a time present during the counting proceedings.

Observers watched the process to ensure that the decisions made by the referendum officials were consistent and that the counting proceedings complied with the requirements of the HST Referendum Regulation. Observers were present throughout the counting process. The observers were also authorized to listen to recordings of the interviews made by BC Stats as part of the verification survey.

Observers were not scrutineers and were permitted to examine the process, but could not challenge or object to decisions of the referendum officials. Observers swore an oath not to publicly disclose the proceedings they were observing.

⁶ At a 99% confidence level, the confidence interval around this estimate ranges from 99.2% to 99.8%.

⁷ If a contacted voter denied participation in the referendum, the certification envelope returned in that voter's name was set aside and not considered for counting.

Public information

The 2011 HST Referendum was the first mail-in referendum since the 2002 Treaty Negotiations Referendum and so Elections BC developed a comprehensive communications plan to inform voters about the referendum and how to participate.

Public information provided by Elections BC was limited to how to request a voting package, how to use the voting package to cast a ballot, and how to return the ballot package to Elections BC to be counted. Providing information about the two possible responses to the referendum question was left to government and to the “Yes” and “No” campaigns approved by the Referendum Funding Decision Maker.

An advertisement advising voters of the upcoming referendum and how to participate was published in daily, community and ethnic newspapers throughout the province during the week of May 27, 2011. A press conference was held at Elections BC headquarters on May 30, 2011 to advise media about the vote by mail process and to demonstrate the use of the voting package materials.

Figure 12: HST Referendum advertisement #1

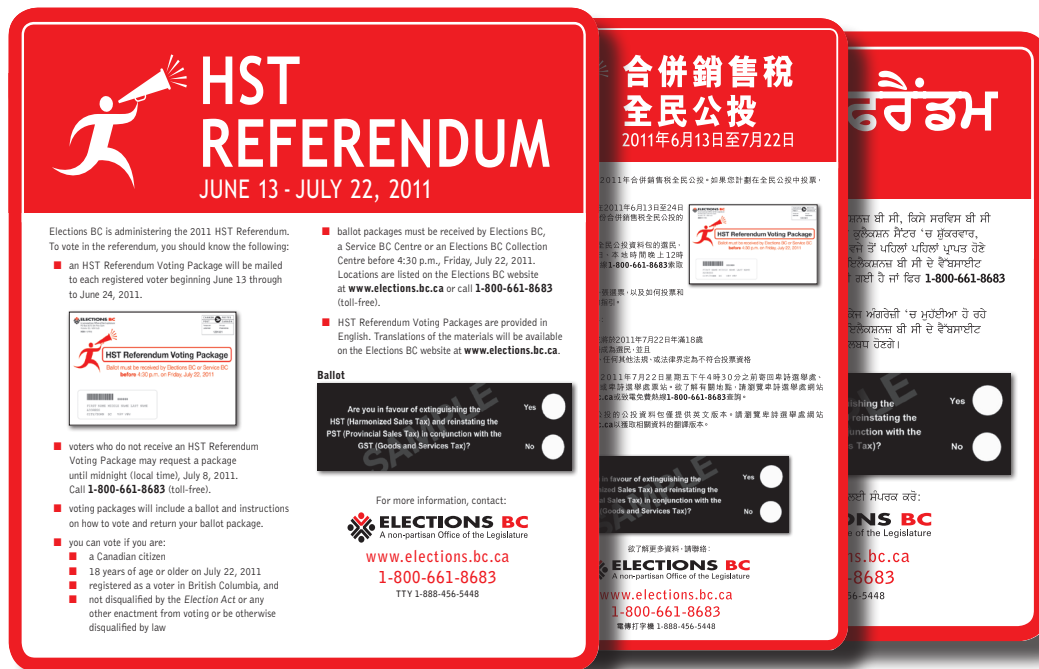
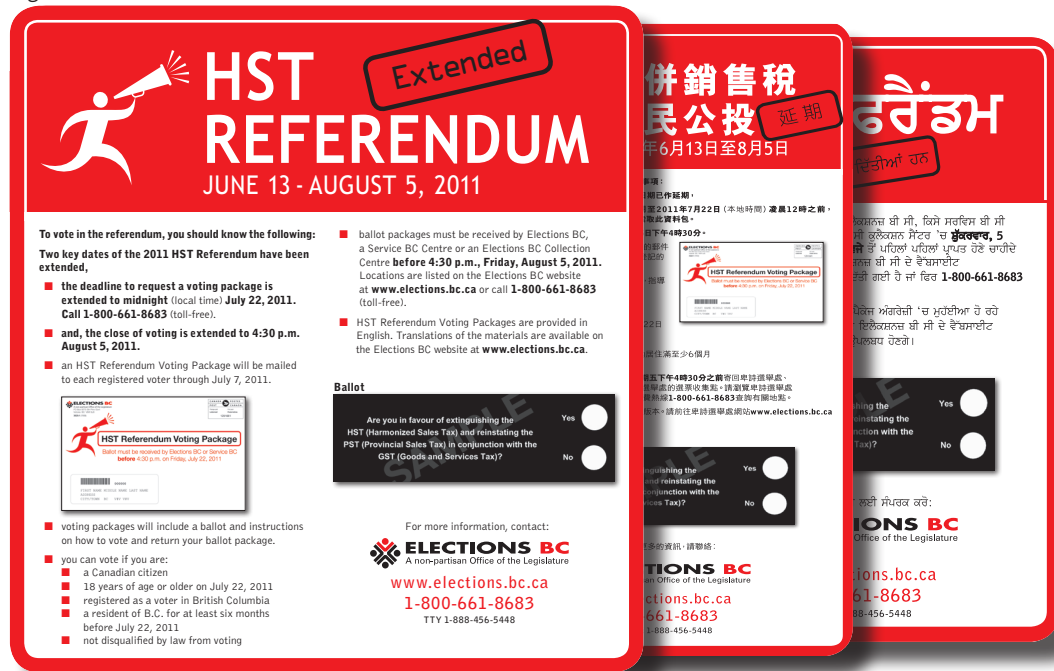


Figure 13: HST Referendum advertisement #2

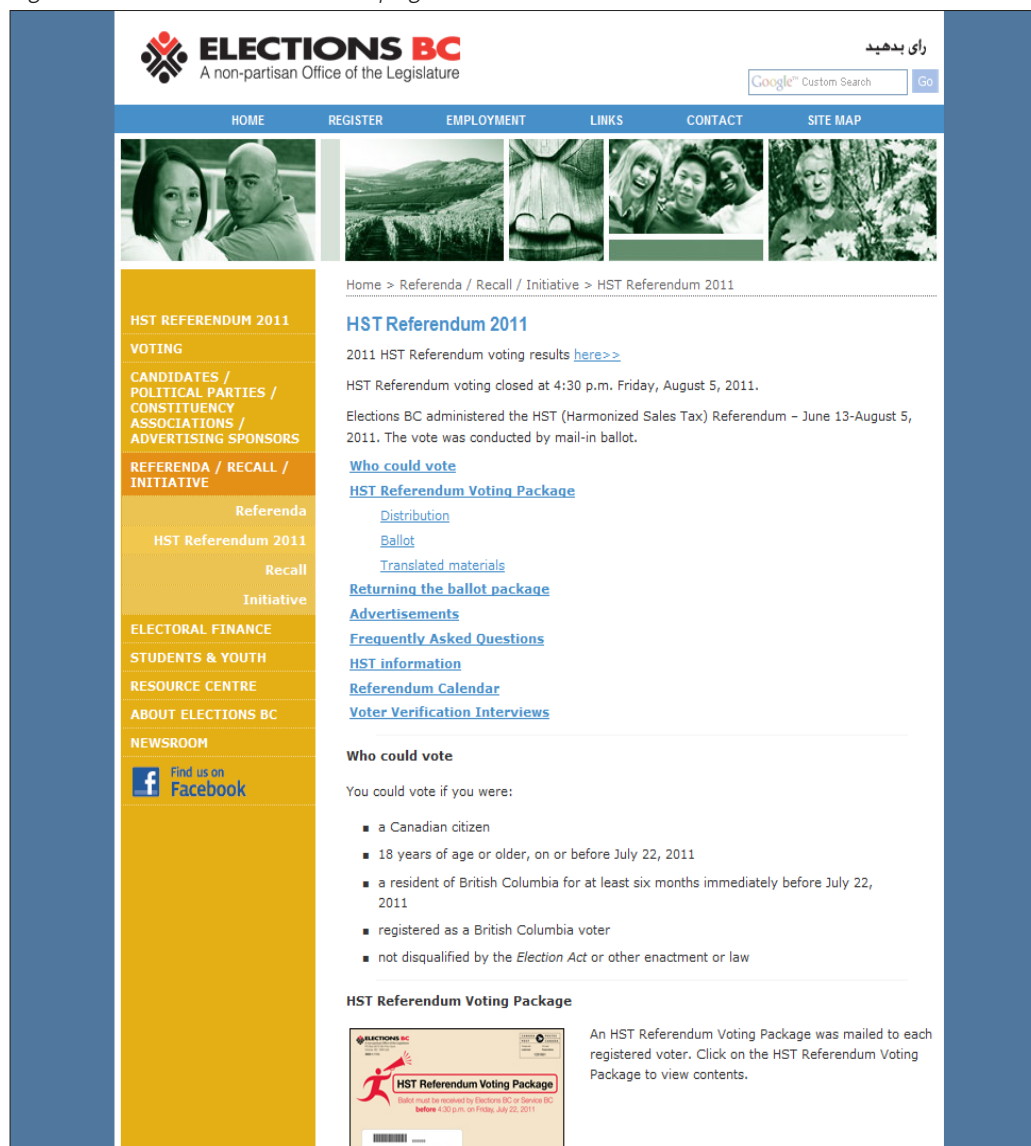


Elections BC revised its communications plan when the Canada Post work stoppage occurred and when mail delivery resumed, to advise voters of the extended deadlines for requesting a voting package and returning their ballot package to Elections BC.

Between June 13 and July 22, Elections BC used radio ads, online banner ads, cable TV channel listings, search engine marketing and social media channels (i.e. Facebook and Twitter) to advise voters when to expect to receive voting packages in their area of the province. Prior to the end of the period for requesting a voting package, Elections BC’s messaging changed to remind voters who had not yet received a voting package, of the July 22 deadline for making such a request. After July 22, Elections BC messaging focused on reminding voters of the 4:30 p.m., August 5 deadline for returning their ballot to Elections BC.

All advertisements directed voters to the Elections BC website and contact centre for more information. The website also contained a sample voting package and a video showing how to use the voting package, the voting package distribution schedule, the addresses and hours of operation for the collection centres and the answers to frequently asked questions regarding the referendum. The 2011 HST Referendum pages on the Elections BC website were visited 162,655 times between June 13 and August 26, 2011.

Figure 14: HST Referendum web page



All voting packages were provided in English, but translated instructions in 16 other languages were available on the Elections BC website.

Figure 15: Voting instructions (Chinese-simplified)

[Chinese Simplified]

HST (合并销售税) 全民公决选票套件 选票和说明

依照本说明单张背面的每个步骤去做是非常重要的。

您必须在证明信封 (B) 上签名并填写您的出生日期, 这样您的选票才会获得接受。

请提供您的电话号码。这是整个程序中的一个重要部分。卑诗选举事务处可能会打电话给您, 以证实您已经投票。

您可以请人帮助您填写此选票套件。这个人只能帮助一名选民, 其名字必须包括在证明信封 (B) 上的空格内。

如有需要, 可于2011年7月8日星期五午夜 (当地时间) 之前索取一个替补套件。请致电卑诗选举事务处1-800-661-8683 (免费长途电话)。

HST (合并销售税) 全民公决选票套件是以英文提供的。卑诗选举事务处的网站 (www.elections.bc.ca) 以下列语言提供这些材料的翻译件: 阿拉伯文、简体中文、繁体中文、伊朗文、法文、德文、印地文、意大利文、日文、韩文、葡萄牙文、旁遮普文、俄文、西班牙文、菲律宾文和越南文。


选票套件必须由卑诗选举事务处、卑诗政府服务中心或卑诗选举事务处的收件中心, 于2011年7月22日星期五下午4:30之前收到。2011年7月22日星期五下午4:30之后收到的选票套件将不获点算。地点清单可见于卑诗选举事务处的网站www.elections.bc.ca, 或致电1-800-661-8683 (免费长途电话)。

请注意, 根据“选举法”和“HST (合并销售税) 全民公决条例”, 以下情况属于违法行为:

- 投票超过一次
- 以别人之名获取选票
- 作出虚假或误导的声明
- 说服或强迫某人投票、如何投票, 或阻止他人投票

违法行为一经定罪可被处以最高达\$20,000的罚款和/或不超过两年的监禁。

查询详情, 请联络:

**ELECTIONS BC**
A non-partisan Office of the Legislature

免费长途电话1-800-661-8683 / 失聪或听觉不灵人士专线1-888-456-5448
www.elections.bc.ca

Elections BC referendum advertising was also provided to 159 social service centres, 614 care facilities, the province's sight-impaired community (through Access for Sight Impaired Consumers and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind), eligible voters incarcerated in British Columbia, and to the province's 240 public libraries.

Voting results

Summary of results

The following pages contain the verified results of the 2011 HST Referendum

Table 8: Summary of results

Response to the referendum question	Number of votes
Yes	881,198
No	728,927
Rejected ballots	2,977
Total votes considered	1,613,102

The votes of more than 50% of the validly cast ballots province-wide were cast for the Yes response and therefore these results are binding on the government that initiated the referendum.

Ballot packages that did not meet the requirements of the HST Referendum Regulation could not be considered for counting. Elections BC received 38,294 ballot packages by the deadline that were not considered in the ballot count because they failed to meet one or more of the requirements of the Regulation.

Table 9: Ballot packages not considered, by reason

Reason	Number of ballot packages that remained unopened
Certification envelope not signed	2,189
Birthdate not provided	5,308
Birthdate provided did not match the voter record	16,146
Certification envelope not signed and birthdate not provided	12,917
Certification envelope not used by the individual to whom it was issued	1,545
Individual appeared to be voting more than once	189
Total number of ballot packages not considered	38,294

2,132 ballot packages met the requirements for counting, but were resealed because the certification envelope either did not contain a secrecy envelope and ballot, or contained more than one secrecy envelope or ballot.

Table 10: Resealed certification and secrecy envelopes, by reason

Reason	Number of ballot packages that were resealed
Certification envelope contained more than one secrecy envelope	30
Certification envelope did not contain a secrecy envelope or ballot	1,204
Secrecy envelope contained more than one ballot	20
Secrecy envelope did not contain a ballot	878
Total number of resealed certification and secrecy envelopes	2,132

An additional 8,472 ballot packages were received after the close of voting.

The voter verification survey conducted by BC Stats established a weighted confirmation rate of 99.70%. This means that once differences in response rates by electoral district were accounted for, 99.70% of all voters contacted by BC Stats confirmed that they voted in the HST referendum. The 99% confidence interval lies between 99.20% and 99.80%. This means that if the voter verification survey was repeated 100 times, in 99 cases the confirmation rate would fall between 99.20% and 99.80%. The results of the voter verification survey were sufficient for the Chief Electoral Officer to be confident that the individuals who returned ballot packages were, in fact, the registered voters to whom the voting packages were issued.

On August 26, 2011, the Chief Electoral Officer reported the results of the referendum to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly as required by section 17 of the HST Referendum Regulation. The Chief Electoral Officer also announced the results of the referendum to the public on the Elections BC website and through a media release on the same day.

Electoral district	Yes	% of valid votes	No	% of valid votes	Total valid votes	Rejected ballots	Registered voters who voted	Total registered voters	Turnout based on ballots considered
Abbotsford-Mission	8,214	45.37%	9,892	54.63%	18,106	26	18,132	35,143	51.59%
Abbotsford South	7,573	43.28%	9,925	56.72%	17,498	30	17,528	34,777	50.40%
Abbotsford West	7,740	48.54%	8,207	51.46%	15,947	38	15,985	31,042	51.49%
Alberni-Pacific Rim	10,665	63.90%	6,024	36.10%	16,689	22	16,711	31,178	53.60%
Boundary-Similkameen	9,679	59.48%	6,593	40.52%	16,272	26	16,298	28,826	56.54%
Burnaby-Deer Lake	11,097	62.62%	6,625	37.38%	17,722	40	17,762	34,857	50.96%
Burnaby-Edmonds	11,827	64.55%	6,494	35.45%	18,321	43	18,364	35,639	51.53%
Burnaby-Lougheed	11,426	58.77%	8,016	41.23%	19,442	46	19,488	36,047	54.06%
Burnaby North	12,956	60.34%	8,516	39.66%	21,472	41	21,513	39,723	54.16%
Cariboo-Chilcotin	6,361	56.90%	4,818	43.10%	11,179	10	11,189	20,741	53.95%
Cariboo North	7,131	58.96%	4,964	41.04%	12,095	22	12,117	23,475	51.62%
Chilliwack	9,572	49.03%	9,949	50.97%	19,521	34	19,555	36,761	53.19%
Chilliwack-Hope	8,991	49.65%	9,118	50.35%	18,109	42	18,151	33,736	53.80%
Columbia River-Revelstoke	8,248	66.19%	4,214	33.81%	12,462	20	12,482	24,078	51.84%
Comox Valley	14,759	53.45%	12,853	46.55%	27,612	42	27,654	49,111	56.31%
Coquitlam-Burke Mountain	10,369	55.85%	8,196	44.15%	18,565	32	18,597	34,103	54.53%
Coquitlam-Maillardville	11,973	54.63%	9,942	45.37%	21,915	35	21,950	37,671	58.27%
Cowichan Valley	13,276	55.55%	10,623	44.45%	23,899	53	23,952	42,225	56.72%
Delta North	11,479	58.44%	8,163	41.56%	19,642	30	19,672	35,355	55.64%
Delta South	9,889	46.46%	11,396	53.54%	21,285	24	21,309	34,579	61.62%
Esquimalt-Royal Roads	12,073	57.96%	8,758	42.04%	20,831	34	20,865	38,502	54.19%
Fort Langley-Aldergrove	11,148	45.84%	13,171	54.16%	24,319	26	24,345	44,997	54.10%
Fraser-Nicola	6,720	55.25%	5,442	44.75%	12,162	17	12,179	21,495	56.66%
Juan de Fuca	12,600	62.50%	7,559	37.50%	20,159	24	20,183	36,963	54.60%
Kamloops-North Thompson	10,779	54.73%	8,916	45.27%	19,695	36	19,731	39,161	50.38%
Kamloops-South Thompson	10,025	44.09%	12,711	55.91%	22,736	28	22,764	41,327	55.08%
Kelowna-Lake Country	10,606	46.90%	12,007	53.10%	22,613	49	22,662	43,844	51.69%
Kelowna-Mission	10,125	44.42%	12,670	55.58%	22,795	47	22,842	44,133	51.76%
Kootenay East	9,629	60.87%	6,191	39.13%	15,820	32	15,852	29,732	53.32%
Kootenay West	11,797	69.62%	5,148	30.38%	16,945	28	16,973	31,100	54.58%
Langley	11,850	48.67%	12,500	51.33%	24,350	22	24,372	44,311	55.00%
Maple Ridge-Mission	10,724	55.80%	8,495	44.20%	19,219	44	19,263	36,898	52.21%
Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows	11,652	56.88%	8,833	43.12%	20,485	35	20,520	37,919	54.12%
Nanaimo	11,661	55.16%	9,478	44.84%	21,139	29	21,168	39,893	53.06%
Nanaimo-North Cowichan	13,779	60.83%	8,871	39.17%	22,650	42	22,692	39,641	57.24%

Report of the Chief Electoral Officer
on the 2011 HST (Harmonized Sales Tax) Referendum
June 13–August 26, 2011

Electoral district	Yes	% of valid votes	No	% of valid votes	Total valid votes	Rejected ballots	Registered voters who voted	Total registered voters	Turnout based on ballots considered
Nechako Lakes	3,626	46.68%	4,141	53.32%	7,767	15	7,782	16,170	48.13%
Nelson-Creston	8,966	63.83%	5,081	36.17%	14,047	36	14,083	27,571	51.08%
New Westminster	13,748	57.33%	10,234	42.67%	23,982	52	24,034	44,662	53.81%
North Coast	4,131	67.18%	2,018	32.82%	6,149	12	6,161	15,100	40.80%
North Island	11,952	57.97%	8,666	42.03%	20,618	30	20,648	39,894	51.76%
North Vancouver-Lonsdale	9,610	48.16%	10,344	51.84%	19,954	37	19,991	38,527	51.89%
North Vancouver-Seymour	8,717	39.41%	13,403	60.59%	22,120	35	22,155	37,572	58.97%
Oak Bay-Gordon Head	10,738	48.60%	11,356	51.40%	22,094	31	22,125	37,916	58.35%
Parksville-Qualicum	13,933	51.57%	13,086	48.43%	27,019	56	27,075	41,609	65.07%
Peace River North	4,407	50.02%	4,403	49.98%	8,810	16	8,826	23,724	37.20%
Peace River South	4,073	58.82%	2,852	41.18%	6,925	11	6,936	17,398	39.87%
Penticton	11,489	50.49%	11,267	49.51%	22,756	46	22,802	42,161	54.08%
Port Coquitlam	11,483	55.61%	9,168	44.39%	20,651	29	20,680	38,142	54.22%
Port Moody-Coquitlam	9,677	50.85%	9,353	49.15%	19,030	23	19,053	34,899	54.59%
Powell River-Sunshine Coast	12,197	58.24%	8,745	41.76%	20,942	31	20,973	36,510	57.44%
Prince George-Mackenzie	8,904	56.92%	6,738	43.08%	15,642	35	15,677	32,903	47.65%
Prince George-Valemount	9,566	58.73%	6,722	41.27%	16,288	28	16,316	34,815	46.86%
Richmond Centre	12,922	63.77%	7,343	36.23%	20,265	63	20,328	43,650	46.57%
Richmond East	14,808	65.58%	7,771	34.42%	22,579	57	22,636	43,719	51.78%
Richmond-Steveston	13,086	55.19%	10,623	44.81%	23,709	42	23,751	42,678	55.65%
Saanich North and the Islands	14,162	51.35%	13,419	48.65%	27,581	22	27,603	44,960	61.39%
Saanich South	12,370	52.52%	11,183	47.48%	23,553	31	23,584	38,306	61.57%
Shuswap	11,130	49.84%	11,202	50.16%	22,332	36	22,368	40,498	55.23%
Skeena	6,354	66.74%	3,167	33.26%	9,521	16	9,537	20,824	45.80%
Stikine	3,300	53.55%	2,863	46.45%	6,163	14	6,177	13,046	47.35%
Surrey-Cloverdale	12,303	47.55%	13,572	52.45%	25,875	30	25,905	46,661	55.52%
Surrey-Fleetwood	11,370	63.10%	6,649	36.90%	18,019	52	18,071	33,791	53.48%
Surrey-Green Timbers	10,827	75.51%	3,511	24.49%	14,338	47	14,385	30,228	47.59%
Surrey-Newton	10,826	72.22%	4,165	27.78%	14,991	35	15,026	31,614	47.53%
Surrey-Panorama	12,087	53.33%	10,577	46.67%	22,664	47	22,711	42,057	54.00%
Surrey-Tynehead	10,736	59.47%	7,316	40.53%	18,052	38	18,090	35,404	51.10%
Surrey-Whalley	10,943	68.88%	4,944	31.12%	15,887	43	15,930	35,049	45.45%
Surrey-White Rock	11,187	45.53%	13,386	54.47%	24,573	36	24,609	40,097	61.37%
Vancouver-Fairview	8,502	47.21%	9,508	52.79%	18,010	27	18,037	42,796	42.15%
Vancouver-False Creek	6,888	44.43%	8,615	55.57%	15,503	32	15,535	38,627	40.22%

Electoral district	Yes	% of valid votes	No	% of valid votes	Total valid votes	Rejected ballots	Registered voters who voted	Total registered voters	Turnout based on ballots considered
Vancouver-Fraserview	15,674	66.01%	8,072	33.99%	23,746	55	23,801	38,790	61.36%
Vancouver-Hastings	13,170	66.86%	6,529	33.14%	19,699	50	19,749	39,258	50.31%
Vancouver-Kensington	13,559	69.48%	5,955	30.52%	19,514	51	19,565	37,149	52.67%
Vancouver-Kingsway	13,701	72.45%	5,211	27.55%	18,912	42	18,954	36,524	51.89%
Vancouver-Langara	11,842	61.65%	7,365	38.35%	19,207	36	19,243	38,222	50.35%
Vancouver-Mount Pleasant	9,840	63.85%	5,571	36.15%	15,411	58	15,469	39,409	39.25%
Vancouver-Point Grey	7,878	41.89%	10,930	58.11%	18,808	22	18,830	40,187	46.86%
Vancouver-Quilichena	7,944	37.60%	13,181	62.40%	21,125	45	21,170	38,354	55.20%
Vancouver-West End	8,354	53.92%	7,139	46.08%	15,493	39	15,532	35,974	43.18%
Vernon-Monashee	12,581	50.92%	12,127	49.08%	24,708	45	24,753	46,157	53.63%
Victoria-Beacon Hill	11,312	55.76%	8,976	44.24%	20,288	46	20,334	43,038	47.25%
Victoria-Swan Lake	11,068	57.73%	8,103	42.27%	19,171	41	19,212	38,704	49.64%
West Vancouver-Capilano	8,620	35.48%	15,676	64.52%	24,296	53	24,349	39,549	61.57%
West Vancouver-Sea to Sky	6,621	39.22%	10,262	60.78%	16,883	19	16,902	35,536	47.56%
Westside-Kelowna	9,623	46.30%	11,161	53.70%	20,784	35	20,819	43,758	47.58%
Totals	881,198	54.73%	728,927	45.27%	1,610,125	2,977	1,613,102	3,063,170	52.66%

Elections BC expenses

Expense categories	Fiscal year 2011/2012
Salaries	\$ 1,350,760
Professional services	439,842
Travel	5,071
Information systems	649,472
General office expenses	810,961
Postage/courier	4,097,396
Advertising and publications	529,330
Building occupancy	184,563
Total	\$ 8,067,395
<hr/>	
Number of registered voters on July 22, 2011	3,063,170
<hr/>	
Cost per registered voter	\$ 2.63

Issues and concerns

While administering the 2011 HST Referendum, the Chief Electoral Officer became aware of a number of issues that arose in administering the first referendum conducted entirely by mail since 2002.

The work stoppage by Canada Post had significant implications for the conduct of the referendum and emphasized the lack of control Elections BC has when conducting a solely mail-based vote.

During the work stoppage, some packages got wet or were stored in locations where moisture led to unreadable barcodes and return envelopes that were sealed before arriving in the voter's mail.

One challenge for voters in extended care facilities during a mail-based vote is that these voters are often reliant on facility administrators to deliver their voting package to them and assist them in completing and returning the ballot package. Elections BC was advised that this help was not always available. In a ballot box vote, election officials attend these facilities and assist voters to mark their ballot.

Because signature comparison is not a reliable method of ensuring that the voting package is used by the voter to whom it was issued, the voter's birthdate was used as a 'shared secret' to provide Elections BC with a certain level of confidence that the voting package was used by the voter to whom it was issued. Elections BC faced two challenges because of this. Although the format for providing the voter's birthdate (YYYY/MM/DD) was clearly printed on the certification envelope, many voters did not follow these instructions. This caused confusion as to whether the birthdates had been simply transposed, or fraudulently completed. Elections BC also encountered a number of instances where the voter's birthdate did not match the voters list. Fortunately Elections BC was able to utilize records from Elections Canada and ICBC to ensure that these voters were not disenfranchised due to a possible administrative error.

In order to maintain centralized control over the issuance of ballots, Elections BC purposefully chose not to allow the collection centres to fulfill requests for voting packages. In future, Elections BC will consider providing the collection centres with the ability to facilitate requests for voting packages (including voter registration if required). Elections BC will also consider establishing a collection centre in the Kelowna area, which has a higher than average population and no local Service BC Centre.

Mail-based votes are particularly reliant on an up-to-date voters list that accurately reflects voters' current mailing addresses. Unlike a traditional ballot box vote where the voter can update their voter registration information in conjunction with voting at a voting place, voters who had moved without advising Elections BC did not receive a voting package automatically. Despite a very high quality voters list, a significant number of registered voters did not receive a voting package during the initial mail-out because they had not updated their addresses with Elections BC. This meant that these voters had to contact Elections BC after the initial mail-out to update their registration information and request a replacement package.

Some voters under-estimated the amount of time it would take to receive a replacement voting package. After the initial request, it typically took Elections BC and its contractors 3-5 days to create the voting package and have it inducted into the mail stream. Delivery of the voting package typically took an additional 2-5 business days once it was inducted, and in some cases longer. This delay resulted in a number of voters giving up and requesting a second replacement package before the first package had time to arrive. This caused confusion for the voter when two packages would subsequently arrive. In future, Elections BC will work to better manage voters' expectations regarding the length of time it will take for them to receive a replacement voting package.

Appendices

Appendix A: Orders of the Chief Electoral Officer

Section 280 of Schedule 2 to the HST Referendum Regulation establishes the authority of the Chief Electoral Officer to make specific or general Orders under certain circumstances. There were seven Orders made by the Chief Electoral Officer relating to the HST Referendum. The Orders are summarized below:

ORD003-2011

June 30, 2011

Due to a stoppage in mail delivery by Canada Post, the deadline for requesting a voting package was extended to midnight local time on Friday, July 22, 2011, and the deadline for the close of voting was extended to 4:30 p.m. local time on Friday, August 5, 2011.

ORD004-2011

August 3, 2011

Due to an error by an Elections BC service provider, 30 voters that requested a voting package prior to the legislated deadline were not issued a voting package until August 3, 2011, when the error was discovered. The deadline for returning a ballot package was extended to 4:30 p.m. on Monday, August 15, 2011, for these voters.

ORD005-2011

August 5, 2011

Due to an error by an Elections BC service provider, 12 voters that requested a voting package prior to the legislated deadline were not issued a voting package until August 5, 2011, when the error was discovered. The deadline for returning a ballot package was extended to 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, August 17, 2011, for these voters.

ORD006-2011

August 8, 2011

In some households receiving more than one voting package, two or more voters in the same household inadvertently voted using each other's voting package. Where referendum officials could determine that, apart from this error, the ballot packages submitted by these voters were completed as required by the Regulation, and that the voters in each case only voted once in the referendum, these ballot packages were considered for counting as if each individual in the household voted using the ballot package issued to them.

ORD007-2011

August 11, 2011

Due to a sorting error by an Elections BC mail services provider, 52 ballot packages that were mailed to Elections BC by voters in early July were not delivered to Elections BC prior to the close of voting. These ballot packages were considered for counting as if they had been received prior to the close of voting.

ORD008-2011

August 11, 2011


Due to errors by Elections BC or a service provider, 39 voters that requested a voting package prior to the legislated deadline were not issued a voting package until after the close of voting when the error was discovered. The deadline for these voters to return a ballot package was extended to 4:30 p.m. on Friday, August 19, 2011.

ORD009-2011

August 11, 2011

Due to an interruption in mail service by a mail services provider, two voters in the same household that requested voting packages prior to the legislated deadline did not receive their voting packages until after the close of voting. The deadline for these voters to return a ballot package was extended to 4:30 p.m. on Friday, August 19, 2011.

Appendix B: Voting package contents



HST Referendum Voting Package Ballot and Instructions

It is important to follow each step on the other side of this instruction sheet.

You **MUST** sign and enter your birthdate on the Certification Envelope (B) for your ballot to be accepted.

Please provide your phone number. It is an important part of the process. You may be called by Elections BC to confirm that you voted.

You may ask someone to help you with this voting package. This person may only help one voter and their name must be included in the space provided on the Certification Envelope (B).

If needed, a replacement package may be requested before midnight (local time) on Friday, July 8, 2011. Call Elections BC at **1-800-661-8683** (toll-free).

HST Referendum Voting Packages are provided in English. Translations of the materials are available on the Elections BC website (www.elections.bc.ca) in the following languages: Arabic, Chinese-Simplified, Chinese-Traditional, Farsi, French, German, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog and Vietnamese.


Ballot packages must be **received** by Elections BC, a Service BC Centre or an Elections BC Collection Centre **before 4:30 p.m. on Friday, July 22, 2011**. Ballot packages received after 4:30 p.m. on Friday, July 22, 2011 will NOT be counted. Locations are listed on the Elections BC website at www.elections.bc.ca or by calling **1-800-661-8683** (toll-free).

Be aware, it is an offence under the *Election Act* and HST Referendum Regulation to:

- vote more than once
- obtain a ballot in someone else's name
- make a false or misleading declaration
- persuade or compel someone to vote, how to vote, or prevent others from voting

Penalties on conviction of an offence are punishable by a fine up to \$20,000 and/or imprisonment not longer than two years.

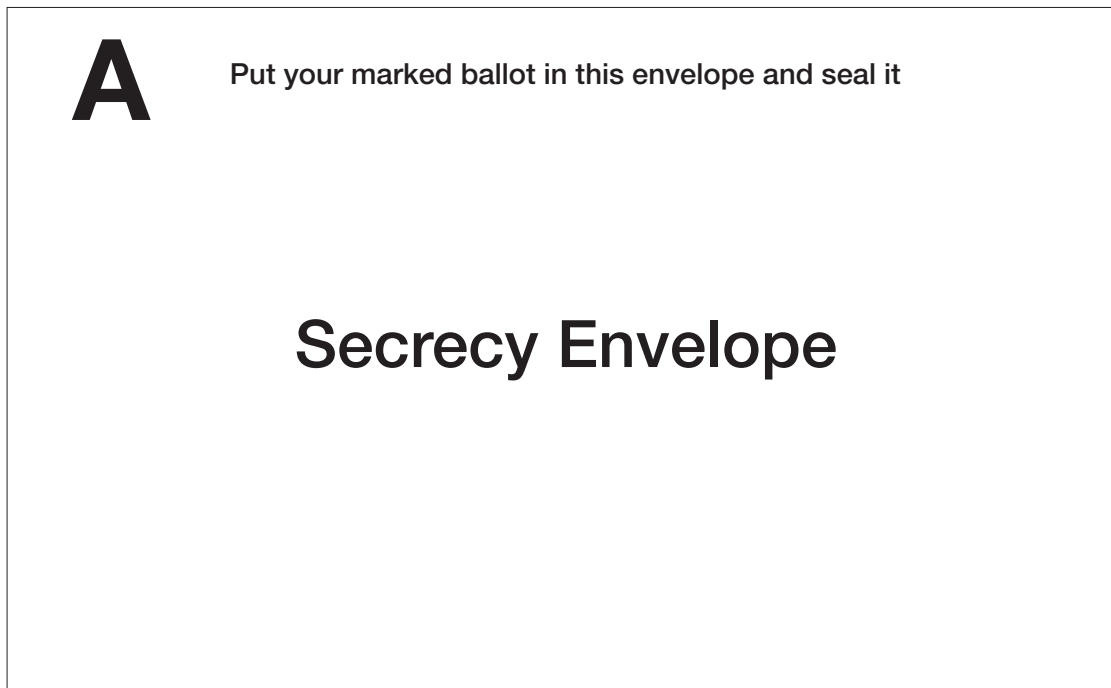
For more information, contact:


ELECTIONS BC
 A non-partisan Office of the Legislature
 Toll-free 1-800-661-8683 / TTY 1-888-456-5448
www.elections.bc.ca

Front



Back



Front

B

Certification Envelope

3025-3 (11/04)

Residential address for:

Declaration
I declare that I am a registered voter and that I have not previously voted in this referendum.

Signature				
Birthdate	Year	Month	Day	Phone

You **MUST** provide your **signature and birthdate**.
See reverse side if your name or address has changed.

Individuals needing assistance to vote

Voters who are physically unable to sign the declaration or have difficulty with reading or writing may ask an individual of their choice for assistance to complete the certification envelope and sign on their behalf.

Name of individual providing assistance:

Print name

OFFICE USE ONLY

Back

B

Put the secrecy envelope (A) in this envelope and seal it

Has your name or address changed?

CHANGE OF NAME (please complete all fields)			
FIRST NAME	MIDDLE NAME(S)	LAST NAME	
BIRTHDATE	LAST 6 DIGITS OF S.I.N.	BC DRIVER'S LICENCE NUMBER	PHONE
YYYY MM DD	XXX XXX XXX		
PREVIOUS NAME			EMAIL

CHANGE OF HOME ADDRESS			
APT/UNIT	NUMBER	STREET	CITY/TOWN
			BC
			V
MAILING ADDRESS (if different from home address)			
PO BOX	CITY/TOWN		POSTAL CODE

Front

C
3025-2 (11/04)

**HST Referendum
Ballot Package**

POST CANADA POSTES CANADA
Postage paid if mailed in Canada / Port payé si posté au Canada
Business Reply Mail / Correspondance-réponse d'affaires
7022137 01

xxx - 000
ELECTORAL DISTRICT NAME

1000077276-V6B4B9-BR01

ELECTIONS BC
PO BOX 6000 STN TERMINAL
VANCOUVER BC V6B 9Z9

Back

C

Before you seal this envelope, have you...

1. marked your ballot ✓
2. separated the ballot from the instructions ✓
3. put the marked ballot in the secrecy envelope **(A)** ✓
4. put the secrecy envelope **(A)** in the certification envelope **(B)** ✓
5. completed the certification envelope **(B)** ✓ (signature and birthdate)
6. put the certification envelope **(B)** in this return envelope **(C)** ✓

Ballot packages must be received by Elections BC or Service BC
before 4:30 p.m. on Friday, July 22, 2011.

Mail your ballot package or deliver to a Service BC Centre or a Elections BC Collection Centre.
List of locations available at www.elections.bc.ca or call toll-free **1-800-661-8683**.

Appendix C: List of Service BC Centres and Elections BC Collection Centres**Service BC Centres**

100 Mile House	Golden	Powell River
Ashcroft	Grand Forks	Prince George
Atlin	Hazelton	Prince Rupert
Bella Coola	Houston	Princeton
Burns Lake	Invermere	Queen Charlotte
Campbell River	Kamloops	Quesnel
Chetwynd	Kaslo	Revelstoke
Chilliwack	Kitimat	Salmon Arm
Clinton	Lillooet	Sechelt
Courtenay	Mackenzie	Smithers
Cranbrook	Maple Ridge	Sparwood
Creston	Masset	Squamish
Dawson Creek	Merritt	Stewart
Dease Lake	Nakusp	Terrace
Duncan	Nanaimo	Trail
Fernie	Nelson	Ucluelet
Fort Nelson	Oliver	Valemount
Fort St. James	Penticton	Vanderhoof
Fort St. John	Port Alberni	Vernon
Ganges	Port Hardy	Williams Lake

Elections BC Collection Centres

Capilano Mall, North Vancouver
 City Square Shopping Centre, Vancouver
 Lougheed Town Centre, Burnaby
 Semiamhoo Shopping Centre, Surrey
 Willowbrook Shopping Centre, Langley

Voting packages could also be returned to Elections BC headquarters in Victoria.

Appendix D: Advertisements

Newspaper advertisement #1

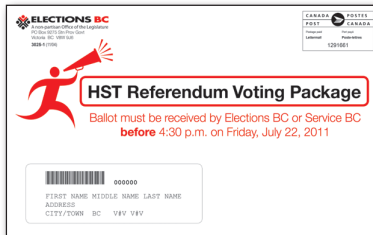


HST REFERENDUM

JUNE 13 - JULY 22, 2011

Elections BC is administering the 2011 HST Referendum. To vote in the referendum, you should know the following:

- an HST Referendum Voting Package will be mailed to each registered voter beginning June 13 through to June 24, 2011.



- voters who do not receive an HST Referendum Voting Package may request a package until midnight (local time), July 8, 2011. Call **1-800-661-8683** (toll-free).
- voting packages will include a ballot and instructions on how to vote and return your ballot package.
- you can vote if you are:
 - a Canadian citizen
 - 18 years of age or older on July 22, 2011
 - registered as a voter in British Columbia, and
 - not disqualified by the *Election Act* or any other enactment from voting or be otherwise disqualified by law

- ballot packages must be received by Elections BC, a Service BC Centre or an Elections BC Collection Centre before 4:30 p.m., Friday, July 22, 2011. Locations are listed on the Elections BC website at www.elections.bc.ca or call **1-800-661-8683** (toll-free).
- HST Referendum Voting Packages are provided in English. Translations of the materials will be available on the Elections BC website at www.elections.bc.ca.

Ballot

Are you in favour of extinguishing the HST (Harmonized Sales Tax) and reinstating the PST (Provincial Sales Tax) in conjunction with the GST (Goods and Services Tax)?	Yes <input type="radio"/>
	No <input type="radio"/>

For more information, contact:



www.elections.bc.ca

1-800-661-8683

TTY 1-888-456-5448

Newspaper advertisement #2



HST REFERENDUM

JUNE 13 - AUGUST 5, 2011

Extended

To vote in the referendum, you should know the following:

Two key dates of the 2011 HST Referendum have been extended,

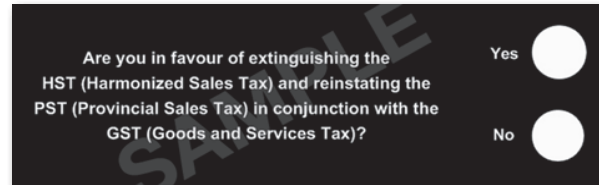
- **the deadline to request a voting package is extended to midnight** (local time) **July 22, 2011.** Call **1-800-661-8683** (toll-free).
- **and, the close of voting is extended to 4:30 p.m. August 5, 2011.**
- an HST Referendum Voting Package will be mailed to each registered voter through July 7, 2011.

- ballot packages must be received by Elections BC, a Service BC Centre or an Elections BC Collection Centre **before 4:30 p.m., Friday, August 5, 2011.** Locations are listed on the Elections BC website at **www.elections.bc.ca** or call **1-800-661-8683** (toll-free).
- HST Referendum Voting Packages are provided in English. Translations of the materials are available on the Elections BC website at **www.elections.bc.ca**.



- voting packages will include a ballot and instructions on how to vote and return your ballot package.
- you can vote if you are:
 - a Canadian citizen
 - 18 years of age or older on July 22, 2011
 - registered as a voter in British Columbia
 - a resident of B.C. for at least six months before July 22, 2011
 - not disqualified by law from voting

Ballot



For more information, contact:




www.elections.bc.ca

1-800-661-8683

TTY 1-888-456-5448

11 x 17 poster #1



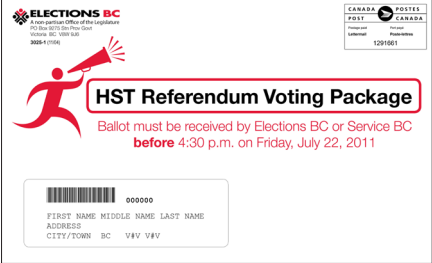
HST REFERENDUM

JUNE 13 - JULY 22, 2011

00008-A (11/05)


Elections BC is administering the 2011 HST Referendum. To vote in the referendum, you should know the following:

- an HST Referendum Voting Package will be mailed to each registered voter beginning June 13 through to June 24, 2011.




- voters who do not receive an HST Referendum Voting Package may request a package until midnight (local time) on Friday, July 8, 2011. Call **1-800-661-8683** (toll-free).
- voting packages will include a ballot and instructions on how to vote and return your ballot package.
- you can vote if you are:
 - a Canadian citizen
 - 18 years of age or older on July 22, 2011
 - a resident of B.C. for at least six months immediately before July 22, 2011
 - registered as a voter in British Columbia, and
 - not disqualified by law from voting
- ballot packages must be received by Elections BC, a Service BC Centre or an Elections BC Collection Centre **before 4:30 p.m., Friday, July 22, 2011**. For locations, call Elections BC at **1-800-661-8683** (toll-free).
- voters who use shelters, hostels or places that provide food, lodging or other social services may use those addresses to receive a voting package.

For more information, contact:

**ELECTIONS BC**
A non-partisan Office of the Legislature
www.elections.bc.ca

1-800-661-8683 | TTY 1-888-456-5448

11 x 17 poster #2



HST REFERENDUM

JUNE 13 - AUGUST 5, 2011

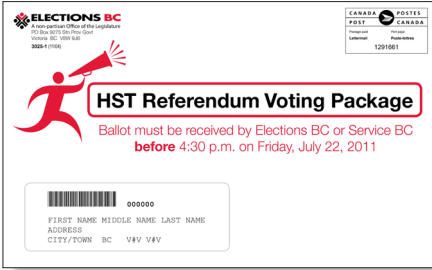
Extended

00008-A (11/06)

To vote in the referendum, you should know the following:


Two key dates of the 2011 HST Referendum have been extended,

- **the deadline to request a voting package is extended to midnight (local time) July 22, 2011. Call 1-800-661-8683 (toll-free).**
- **and, the close of voting is extended to 4:30 p.m. August 5, 2011.**



- **an HST Referendum Voting Package has been mailed to each registered voter through July 7, 2011.**
- **voting packages will include a ballot and instructions on how to vote and return your ballot package.**
- **you can vote if you are:**
 - a Canadian citizen
 - 18 years of age or older on July 22, 2011
 - a resident of B.C. for at least six months immediately before July 22, 2011
 - registered as a voter in British Columbia, and
 - not disqualified by law from voting
- **ballot packages must be received by Elections BC, a Service BC Centre or an Elections BC Collection Centre before 4:30 p.m., Friday, August 5, 2011. For locations, call Elections BC at 1-800-661-8683 (toll-free).**
- **voters who use shelters, hostels or places that provide food, lodging or other social services may use those addresses to receive a voting package.**

For more information, contact:

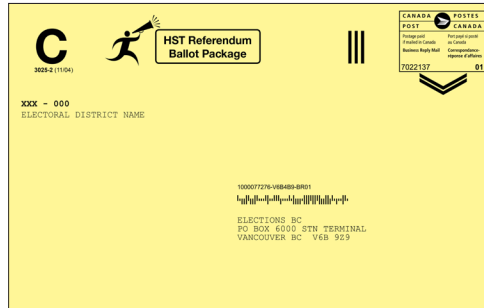


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1-800-661-8683 | TTY 1-888-456-5448

30" x 40" double-sided signage

You can deliver your HST Referendum Ballot Package



HERE

Before
4:30 p.m. Friday, August 5, 2011

For more information,
call 1-800-661-8683 (toll-free)



Toll-free 1-800-661-8683 / TTY 1-888-456-5448
www.elections.bc.ca

30" x 40" double-sided signage

Did you get your HST Referendum Voting Package?

Voting packages will be mailed to all registered voters
between June 30 and July 7



To request a package,
call Elections BC at 1-800-661-8683
before midnight Friday, July 22, 2011

Translations of the materials are available on the Elections BC
website (www.elections.bc.ca) in the following languages:

Arabic (عربي), Chinese-simplified (中文(简体)),
Chinese-traditional (中文(繁體)), Farsi (فارسی), French (Français),
German (Deutsch), Hindi (हिन्दी), Italian (ITALIANO), Japanese (日本語),
Korean (한국어), Portuguese (PORTUGUÊS), Punjabi (ਪੰਜਾਬੀ),
Russian (Русский), Spanish (Español), Tagalog (TAGALOG),
Vietnamese (Việt Ngữ)



A non-partisan Office of the Legislature
Toll-free 1-800-661-8683 / TTY 1-888-456-5448
www.elections.bc.ca

30" x 40" double-sided signage

Elections BC Collection Centre

HST Referendum Voting Packages

■ June 13 - July 7, 2011

An HST Referendum Voting Package mailed to each registered voter

■ July 22, 2011 - midnight (local time)

Deadline to request a voting package

■ August 5, 2011 - 4:30 p.m.

Deadline for ballot package to be received by Elections BC, a Service BC Centre or an Elections BC Collection Centre

For more information,
call Elections BC at 1-800-661-8683 (toll-free)




ELECTIONS BC

A non-partisan Office of the Legislature

www.elections.bc.ca

Online/SEM banner advertisement



The banner advertisement is a vertical rectangle divided into three horizontal sections. The top section is white and features a red silhouette of a person running while shouting into a megaphone. The middle section is a solid red block containing the text "The HST Referendum has been extended." in white, bold, sans-serif font. The bottom section is white and contains the Elections BC logo, which consists of a stylized black and red figure. Below the logo, the text "ELECTIONS BC" is written in bold black letters, followed by "A non-partisan Office of the Legislature" in smaller black text. At the bottom of this section, the phone number "1-800-661-8683" and the website "www.elections.bc.ca" are listed in red text.

**The HST
Referendum
has been
extended.**

ELECTIONS BC
A non-partisan Office of the Legislature

1-800-661-8683
www.elections.bc.ca

Appendix E: Glossary

Accepted	A certification envelope that passes the review process.
Ballot	The ballot paper included in the voting package for marking a response to the referendum question.
Ballot package	The set of materials returned to Elections BC by voters. The ballot package consists of the marked ballot within a secrecy envelope, certification envelope and return envelope.
Cancelled voting package	A voting package that Elections BC has mailed to a voter, but later determined should be invalidated because a replacement voting package has been issued or for another valid reason. A voting package must be cancelled before a replacement voting package may be issued.
Certification envelope (B)	The personalized envelope within the ballot package that contains the secrecy envelope and ballot. The voter's mandatory information is collected on the front, and on the back is space for a voter to update their voter registration information.
Collection Centre	Elections BC ballot package drop-off locations in malls in the Metro Vancouver area.
Consider	The evaluation of a certification envelope or ballot to determine whether it meets the legislated requirements.
Contact Centre	Elections BC 1-800 call centre.
Counting	The consideration and tallying of individual ballots once they have been removed from certification and secrecy envelopes.
HST (Harmonized Sales Tax) Referendum Regulation	Legislation under the <i>Referendum Act</i> that lays out the rules for the administration of the 2011 HST Referendum.
Initial mail-out	The mailing of voting packages to all individuals who were registered voters at the time of the initial mail-out.

Mandatory information	The information (full name, residential address, birthdate, signature) required by the HST Referendum Regulation to be present on a certification envelope for the certification envelope to be opened. The voter's full name and residential address are preprinted by Elections BC.
Not accepted	A certification envelope that does not pass the review process.
Outer envelope	The envelope in which voting packages are mailed to voters.
Referendum Act	Legislation that establishes the referendum process in British Columbia.
Referendum Funding Decision Maker (RFDM)	The individual (Stephen Owen, Q.C.) appointed by government as responsible for determining which groups or organizations would receive public funds to advocate for the two responses to the ballot question and for the distribution and management of the funds. The RFDM has no relationship with the Chief Electoral Officer or Elections BC.
Regulation	See HST Referendum Regulation.
Rejected ballot	A ballot that was considered during ballot counting, but not adjudicated to be a ballot that could be counted as either a YES or NO response.
Return envelope (C)	The prepaid, pre-addressed envelope in which a ballot package is returned to Elections BC.
Review	A multi-stage process of evaluating a certification envelope to determine whether it meets the requirements of the HST Referendum Regulation and can be opened.
Sample set	The certification envelopes for voters that have been randomly selected by BC Stats to be contacted as part of verification. The sample set is selected from accepted voting packages.
Secrecy envelope (A)	The envelope in which the ballot is placed prior to being returned to Elections BC. The secrecy envelope ensures that the ballot cannot be linked to the voter whose information is on the certification envelope.

Set aside	A ballot package or certification envelope that cannot be considered for opening or counting for a reason established by the HST Referendum Regulation (e.g. received after close of voting, missing mandatory information).
Spoiled ballot	A ballot that has been soiled, improperly printed, or spoiled in marking by the elector and can be exchanged for a replacement ballot. One of the valid reasons for requesting a replacement voting package.
Valid votes	Ballots that were considered during ballot counting and adjudicated to be a ballot that could be counted as either a “Yes” or “No” response.
Verification survey	A process consisting of a telephone interview conducted by BC Stats on behalf of Elections BC with sampled voters to confirm that the voter named on the certification envelope was the person who voted. The verification survey provides the Chief Electoral Officer with an additional level of assurance that voter impersonation has not occurred. The verification survey will provide a confidence level for the results of the counting process.
Voting package	The set of materials mailed to voters by Elections BC for the conduct of the referendum. The voting package consists of an outer envelope, return envelope, certification envelope, secrecy envelope, ballot and instruction sheet.

Mailing Address:

PO Box 9275 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9J6

Phone: 250-387-5305

Toll-free: 1-800-661-8683 / TTY 1-888-456-5448

Fax: 250-387-3578

Toll-free Fax: 1-866-466-0665

Email: electionsbc@elections.bc.ca

Website: www.elections.bc.ca

