



## NEWS RELEASE

British Columbia Civil Liberties Association  
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For immediate release

### **BCCLA condemns violence as protest tactic**

The British Columbia Civil Liberties Association (the "BCCLA"), Canada's oldest and foremost civil liberties group, today condemned violence as a protest tactic following an incident where a PETA protester apparently threw a "tofu cream pie" hitting the federal fisheries minister squarely in the face. The Minister was attending the Canadian Centre for Inland Waters in Burlington, Ontario to deliver a speech and listen to others concerning the opening of an Aquatic Life Research Facility.

BCCLA President Robert Holmes said: "When someone interferes with the personal security of another, they cross a very important line. They end their engagement with lawful expression when they begin an unlawful assault. Citizens in a democracy are responsible for ensuring that laws exist to protect personal security. That applies to all of us, including elected officials. Persons who violate the law should not expect their actions to be laughed off. They attack fundamental freedoms and Canadians regard that as a very serious matter."

The BCCLA regularly stands up for the rights of persons who engage in lawful protest and dissent. It supports legal challenges where freedom of expression is unconstitutionally infringed or denied by unconstitutional government action or laws. But the BCCLA does not support or encourage physical violence, whether done in a misguided effort to gain attention or otherwise.

"All reasonable Canadians condemn this attack and other forms of violence that misguided persons engage in so as to make their point. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms puts the guarantee of freedom best," said Holmes. "Everyone has 'freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression' and 'the right to life, liberty and security of the person.'"

#### **MEDIA CONTACTS:**

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