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## **Don't waste your vote on the NDP, Harper tells British Columbians: West Coast army base, possible compensation for leaky condo victims, inquiry into Air India among planks in 'Stand up for B.C.' platform**

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VICTORIA -- British Columbians have a unique opportunity to turn Canada's political establishment "on its ear" on Jan. 23 and shouldn't waste their votes on the NDP, says Conservative leader Stephen Harper.

The Tory leader made the pronouncement on the weekend after unveiling a broad "Stand up for B.C." platform that includes the promise of more House of Commons seats for B.C., Alberta and Ontario -- a potentially risky move in Quebec because it would reduce slightly that province's relative share of seats in Parliament.

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He also said he'd reconsider Ottawa's planned privatization of the Ridley Coal Terminal in northern B.C., consider compensation for victims of B.C.'s \$1.5-billion leaky condo crisis and bring back a dedicated police force for Canadian ports.

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Harper credited the work of his 22 B.C. MPs for the platform, and said the package is far more significant than Martin's B.C. proposals, which have included the move of the Canadian Tourism Commission to Vancouver and various cost-shared projects like the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre expansion.

"There's simply no comparison between our party's focus on B.C. issues and the platforms of the other parties, particularly the Liberal party, when it comes to B.C."

Liberal promises for B.C. involve "one or two showy initiatives where it's frankly just playing the reluctant second fiddle to the provincial government."

While the Tory B.C. platform includes a number of old promises, including funding to help forestry firms and \$1 billion to fight the Mountain Pine Beetle infestation, the platform includes newer promises to:

- Review the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's handling of "construction regulations and leaky condos." **The promise stems from MP John Cummins' research indicating that CMHC knew in the early 1980s that federal building codes were causing moisture damage.**

- Share the cost with the B.C. government and the city of Victoria for a water-treatment plant, which has been estimated to cost several hundred million dollars.

- Extend Coast Guard search-and-rescue capabilities and "introduce an Unmanned Aviation Vehicle for safer and more comprehensive surveillance of the Pacific and Arctic regions."