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February 1, 2005

Mr. Rick Mahler  
Chair, Partnerships British Columbia  
#1250 – 999 West Hastings Street  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
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Dear Mr. Mahler,

My work plan for 2004 included an intention to report on the Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre public-private partnership project. My intent was to focus on the management practices used to ensure the project was delivered in a cost-effective manner.

During discussions on the scope of my work, I found that Partnerships British Columbia planned to produce a comprehensive report on the Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre project up to the finalization of the Project Agreement. The scope of my planned approach would have duplicated much of the work carried out by Partnerships British Columbia in preparing its report. Therefore, I decided that my approach would shift from a direct report—where I issue a detailed report to legislators and the public—to an attestation report—where my opinion on management’s written assertions would be attached to the Partnerships British Columbia report in the form of a Review Engagement Report.

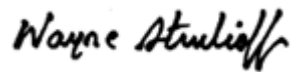
My work focussed on providing a review level of assurance. That review required Partnerships British Columbia management to provide my staff with sufficient appropriate evidence to support the key assertions made in its report. I would like to acknowledge and thank Partnerships British Columbia staff for their considerable assistance in providing the detailed information and explanations requested by my staff.

I concur with the authors of the report when they caution that “the ultimate success of the project will be contingent on the successful implementation of the next stages of the project”. I would also add that the ultimate success of the project will depend on effective management throughout the full term of the Project Agreement.

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When those who manage a significant government initiative report directly on their performance, the result is better accountability to legislators and the public. Including independent assurance that the reporting fairly presents the results of the initiative—as has been done for the Abbotsford Regional Hospital and Cancer Centre project—adds credibility to the reporting. I appreciate Partnerships British Columbia’s willingness to engage in this leading-edge practice of having its Report reviewed by my Office. This is a step forward in improving the openness, transparency and timeliness of reporting to legislators and the public on significant government initiatives.

Yours truly,



Wayne Strelieff, FCA  
Auditor General