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Releases

Families Welcome Provincial Contribution to Farmworkers Memorial

Vancouver, BC – Families of three women killed in a tragic and preventable van crash near Abbotsford in 2007 expressed their thanks today for a $100,000 contribution from the government of British Columbia and the Workers' Compensation Board to a memorial project in honour of the women, Amarjit Kaur Bal, Sukhvinder Kaur Punia and Sarbjit Kaur Sidhu.

"The families greatly appreciate the province's contribution and the honour it brings to my wife, her co-workers, and all farmworkers in British Columbia. We are very excited to raise the rest of the funds needed to get this monument built," said Jagjeet Singh Sidhu, husband of Sarbjit Kaur Sidhu.

The families, with the support of the B.C. Federation of Labour, Abbotsford Community Services and the Progressive Intercultural Community Services Society, have worked to establish a permanent monument to honour all BC farmworkers and ensure these women are always remembered.

"No memorial can ever bring these women back, and my heart goes out to their families and friends," said Pat Bell, Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Minister Responsible for Labour. "This memorial will serve as a lasting reminder to employers, workers and the community that safety on the job is the number one priority. We are honoured to have been asked to contribute to its creation."

Including in-kind contributions from the City of Abbotsford, the Golden Tree Monument, to be erected along the shoreline of Mill Lake in Abbotsford, has an ambitious budget of $250,000. The province's contribution of $100,000 includes a $20,000 contribution from WorkSafeBC. Together, these funds will allow project supporters to finalize fundraising commitments from community partners, labour groups, business and individuals in the region.

"I want to thank the government and the Workers' Compensation Board for their contribution to this important monument," said Jim Sinclair, President of the B.C. Federation of Labour. "I also want to pay tribute to the hard work and dedication of the families – with their continued efforts, I am confident that this project will be successful."

"The Golden Tree monument, the first monument to farmworkers in Canada, is a breathtaking representation of the three women, forever entwined, their arms as branches, reaching to the sky. It serves as a beacon of hope to all farmworkers and their families for continued improvements in the health and safety conditions in the agricultural industry," said Harsharan Singh Bal, son of Amarjit Kaur Bal.

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For more information contact: Jessie Uppal 604-220-0739.