



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Statement by Alice West, President, regarding HandyDART services**

"Many seniors and people with disabilities are today trapped in their homes, unable to go out for food or medical appointments. They are the victims of a heartless government decision to contract out HandyDART to an American corporation.

"Several years ago, when I needed help to get around, I relied on HandyDART to get to physiotherapy three times a week. The drivers were unfailingly courteous and thoughtful. They picked me up at my door, and stayed with me until I was safely in the physiotherapist's office. I am very grateful for what they did for me, and all that they continue to do to improve the lives of so many others.

"These conscientious drivers are also the victims of a government philosophy that values private profit more than service to people.

"The American contractor, MVT Bus, is trying to take away the drivers' pension plan. Small wonder ten months of negotiations have gone nowhere. And instead of negotiating, the company wasted all of last week by forcing a pointless 'final offer vote' on the same pension-busting proposals that caused its employees to strike.

"For MVT, boosting profits for shareholders is more important than service to people, more important than allowing long-term workers to keep their pension plan so they can retire in dignity.

"I hope the company comes to its senses and returns to the bargaining table. More importantly, I hope the government will change direction and come to realize that caring for people is more important than fattening the bottom line of a foreign corporation."

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*BC FORUM represents more than 7,000 workers who are retired or near retirement. The organization is governed by a volunteer board of directors. Among other activities, BC FORUM negotiates group rates on extended health and other services, and advocates on issues that affect retired workers and their families.*

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