

AAAS Annual Meeting Advance Press Conference

Tim Meyer: Good morning. We'll get started if you want to find a place to stand and face the front. And you can feel free to come forward. Trust me, the whales will be here after the event, so I know we are competing with some of B.C.'s most influential and handsome citizens but, thank you.

So if I could have our speakers join me up front here and grab a chair, so Richard, John, Wai, Andrew, Julio and Karen, it's a little tight seating but, please. That's right. So when we actually bring 8,000 people to Vancouver it's going to be kind of this tightly packed, so. That's good. Musical chairs. Okay.

Okay, so good morning. I want to thank you all for making the trip here to join me in Northern Alaska here at the Vancouver Aquarium. We've certainly been having some fluky weather but for those of you coming from Ottawa or out of town, trust me, Vancouver does have pleasant winters.

So welcome to today's kickoff event for AAAS fever which is not an ailment that you're ill of, but actually the enthusiasm and the energy ramping up to this big conference. So as Sean Sullivan noted in the Vancouver Province newspaper, this event will raise Vancouver's IQ for several days in the middle of February. And it's not because I'm leaving.

So my name is Tim Meyer and I work for TRIUMF. If you read the program you probably know that I'm under 40 years old, but we'll talk about that later. And I will teach you about isotopes or explain to you how neutrinos can break the speed limit or comment on whether the [Higgs] is heavier than one of our whales but if you're curious find me or Nigel Lockyer afterwards and we'll talk your ear off.

So instead I'm here today in the capacity and the head of the Vancouver local organizing committee for AAAS

and a member of Canada's steering committee for preparations for this conference. But before we get into that, I do want to get our hosts, our very gracious and generous hosts at the Aquarium a chance to introduce themselves.

So we're here at the Vancouver Aquarium, one of the top research and education organizations in North America. Dr. John Nightingale is President and CEO of the Aquarium and our host. He's a professional biologist and public educator. So thank you, John.

Dr. John Nightingale: Welcome, everyone. Both the aquarium and I personally are excited about AAAS coming to Vancouver. I ended up in science because of a AAAS conference. As a third-year university student in a small, liberal arts university, a chemistry professor rounded up three other students and we drove for 30 hours to San Francisco to the AAAS conference. And it was an eye-opener, perspective changer, and for me it decided my career. I was debating engineering science, engineering biology. After that conference, it was pretty clear which direction I wanted to go.

So I think having the conference come to the Vancouver, the benefits to the city, the region, the country, we won't know some of those benefits for years. But particularly for the students who get to come, it will be a perspective changer.

For the Aquarium, science has always been a part of our mandate. It was a founding mandate laid down by the Board of this Aquarium in 1952, and whether it's the first breeding of the endangered organ spotted frog or Dr. Marty Haulena's pioneering work on wildlife diseases or Dr. [Landsberett Leonard's] multiple project marine mammal research program, our propagation lab, we've always had original scientific research here as part of our mandate. And that's unusual for a civic institution or a cultural institution.

That said, we think that in many ways the surface of the ocean is the greatest – is a great barrier to human

imagination and human awareness. So our focus here is engaging people, connecting them to the natural world, and we are very clear about the fact that science and scientific information is at the base of everything we do. So our teams of researchers, educators, communicators, work with scientists and collaborators around the world to bring the best knowledge and perspective, and then translate that into something that around the Aquarium we use my mother, that my mother would understand. So it needs to be accessible, it needs to be understandable, it needs to be compelling and interesting. And that's our specialty.

So we now see about a million visitors a year in the Aquarium. For everyone we see in the Aquarium we now interact with four interactively in the digital universe, and 10 more through our communications channels. And those audiences are growing, are doubling every three years. So the reach is far beyond just the physical Aquarium.

So this year's theme of Flattening the World: Building the Global Knowledge Society, absolutely aligns with our interdisciplinary approach and our goal of making sure that we have both rock solid scientific information, but that we're better and better at interpreting it so that people who aren't scientists find it interesting, compelling and accessible.

So we're delighted that AAAS is here. It's a great coup for Vancouver and for Canada

Tim Meyer: Thanks, John. It is good to be here actually at the Aquarium. And I think what John is being modest about is the large role that the Aquarium is playing in this conference, from hosting evening receptions for reporters, to working with the American Junior Academy of Sciences and U.S. students that they're bringing to Vancouver.

So what are we actually doing here? What are we doing here today? Well, we're here to recognize and celebrate Canadian talent. Not hockey talent, not snowboard aerials, not banking acumen. No, we're here actually to

proclaim and to acclaim that Canada is actually pretty good at science, technology and innovation. So we're here to be proud of the fact that Canada has been selected to host the Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science this coming February. It's like the Winter Olympics, but for people who defy the ordinary, who do what seems impossible, but with their brains rather than their bodies.

It's sometimes hard to explain what makes the AAAS meeting special and what makes the opportunity to host it such a privilege. So we'll hear in a moment from Dr. Alan Leshner, the Chief Executive officer of the venerable AAAS Society. Dr. Leshner has been the CEO of AAAS and the publisher of the science magazine Science since December, 2001. Before coming to AAAS, Dr. Leshner was Director of the U.S. National Institute on Drug Abuse. Please.

Dr. Alan Leshner: Good morning, everyone, particularly to our colleagues. I want to thank you all for coming here this morning and thank you for hosting us. The American Association for the Advancement of Science, the AAAS, is delighted to be holding its annual conference in Canada in the beautiful City of Vancouver, British Columbia. This is the first time in more than 30 years that the AAAS conference has been held outside the United States, and Canada as a global science research and innovation leader and partner was really a very easy choice.

From February 16th to the 20th next month, nearly 8,000 of the world's top scientists and engineers as well as students, policymakers, journalists and the general public will convene in Vancouver. The mission of our association, AAAS, is to advance science and engineering throughout the world for the benefit of all people.

We are a truly international global organization. We're the world's largest general scientific society, and it's a wonderful fit, therefore, to bring the conference to Canada this year. The theme of the 2012 annual conference is a Flattening the World: Building the Global Knowledge Society. More than 170 scientific symposia and an array of plenary and topical lectures will explore solutions to global problems that connect all of us through science,

engineering, technology and education.

The better we share the knowledge that we have, the sooner we can build on it to tackle urgent problems, from famine and disease to our changing climate. The world's best scientific brains will be coming to Vancouver next month to present their latest discoveries and breakthroughs on everything from climate change impacts on the Arctic, to breakthroughs in digital media. And the world's top scientific journalists will be here to communicate those advances. It's an essential event for scientists and journalists from around the world to connect and share their progress.

We look forward to hearing about some global breakthroughs at the AAAS Annual Meeting. Science news headlines to emerge from this year's meeting are likely to encompass topics like hydraulic fracturing or gas fracking, archaeoacoustics, climate change impacts to marine life, endangered languages, particle physics and much more. This is, after all, one of the broadest, most interdisciplinary meetings that the scientific community holds.

AAAS has been working closely with large teams of Canadian advisors in Ottawa, Vancouver and elsewhere. Our advisors have included the Government of Canada, the Province of British Columbia and the City of Vancouver. All of them are working hard to help us make this event a success, and I particularly want to thank [Neil Turek], Andrew Petter and [Stephen Toupe] for all of their work on our behalf.

The 2012 AAAS conference in Vancouver is about bringing the world of science together and bringing science to the world, and by this we also mean the people of Vancouver and Canada. The AAAS Annual Meeting is not just for scientists. We are also planning in collaboration with our Canadian partners, two free Family Science Days. This will include two-dozen hands-on science learning activities for young people, educators and families as well as exciting stage presentations. I'll let my Canadian colleagues tell you about what we have planned for families, but for more information you can also log on to our website, www.AAAS.org/meetings.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Vancouver beginning on February the 16th.

Tim Meyer: So thank you, Dr. Leshner, and thank you to AAAS for selecting Vancouver as the venue for this meeting. This is a major conference and it's a major stimulus for the tourism and hospitality industry; 8,000 people visiting Vancouver, and I bet at least a few of them will go skiing, maybe even drink a cup of coffee and better yet, they might even pay for parking.

So let's hear from one of the people who helped make this possible, a co-chair of the conference, Andrew Petter, Professor and President of Simon Fraser University. Professor Petter is a rare breed, a law professor and then Dean of the Law School from the University of Victoria, who actually still resides in lower mainland B.C. He's currently President of Simon Fraser University, where he brings a lifelong commitment to education, and extensive experience as a teacher, scholar and administrator. He's even been a Minister of the B.C. Government. What might not be so obvious is like other famous politicians in B.C., he too used to be a radio personality. Professor Petter.

Andrew Petter: Thank you, Tim; I think. You'll notice Tim did not say that I'm a scientist because I definitely am not but it is an incredible privilege to be here as one of the host co-chairs for the AAAS, which is the world's largest general scientific society.

And as you've heard, this is a major, major event for the scientific community but I think it's a major event for us here in Vancouver as well. Excitement is already starting to build as we prepare to welcome renowned speakers from around the globe and to provide associated activities to engage and inform the public.

And the fact that Canada was chosen and Vancouver was chosen as the first site in 30 years to host this

conference outside of the United States, I think is a tremendous testament to Canadian science, to the credibility and regard in which our scientific community is held, and particularly I think the British Columbia scientific community is held around the world.

Canadian talent, knowledge and expertise are going to be showcased in every aspect at this conference, from plenary speakers to Family Science Days to seminars on the intersection of science and society. And I'm especially pleased that there is going to be representatives from the universities, Simon Fraser and UBC and other universities in British Columbia who will be very much participating in all the activities that this conference has to offer.

This year's conference theme, Flattening the World: Building the Global Knowledge Society speaks to the opportunity through international multidisciplinary efforts to harness science to seek solutions to some of the world's most complex and pressing problems. And as you've heard, we may well hear some major advances on the part of science in addressing some of those problems.

Science today is very much a global enterprise, with governments, industry and academia all playing key roles. And what's exciting about this conference is it's going to bring those communities together. It's going to engage some of the world's brightest minds, enabling dialogues, collaborations and new insights for the benefit both of science and society.

And I think what's particularly exciting for those of us who are residents of greater Vancouver is we're not going to be shut out from this conference; quite the opposite. The conference is going to draw us in. It's going to raise our awareness regarding science, it's going to give us opportunities to interact with the scientific community, and it's going to be I think a tremendous stimulus for us going ahead in building our own scientific knowledge and our own scientific capacity here in British Columbia and throughout Canada.

So in sum, I'm delighted, thrilled in fact that Vancouver is hosting the AAAS Annual Meeting and like so many, I'm looking forward to an exciting and stimulating conference as I hope all people in Vancouver are as well.

Thank you very much.

Tim Meyer: Thank you, Andrew. Inspiring words. So what is the value of a major research conference like this? I mean, don't scientists and students and teachers all use e-mail and Skype and cell phones, Facebook to stay closely connected? What's the significance of actually gathering them together in one spot for a few days?

So to comment on this and share a little bit about what a scientific conference represents and what they'll be sharing, we'll hear from some of our athletes. So I have the privilege of introducing Professor Karen Bakker. She's a Canada Research Chair and a Professor and Director of the UBC Program on Water Governance. A decorated, thoughtful leader in the area of future water supply and security. She is essentially one of our gold-medal contenders, and Karen has another distinction. She's been selected by AAAS to give one of only about a dozen topical plenary lectures at the conference, and this is an opportunity to literally address thousands of her colleagues. That's what I call owning the podium. Karen?

Karen Bakker: Thanks very much. It's a great opportunity to be here. And I'll start my comments with a question that I often use to kick off my lectures to students. How much of the world's water do you think Canada has? The answer is a lot less than you might think. We have less than 7% of the world's annual renewable fresh water. And a lot of that is located in the north, far away from centers of population. That means that water is actually a very precious resource in Canada and working to conserve that precious resource is the focus of the Program on Water Governance. Let me tell you a little bit about the work we do.

We do a lot of work on transboundary water issues, identifying hotspots and bringing together people from Canada and the U.S. to work out better management solutions for transboundary water. We also work on drinking water security. You may not know the Canada is the only OECD country that does not have laws

governing drinking water. And we've been working actively on inventing better water security assessment and protection mechanisms for drinking water, as well as encouraging stronger regulation provincially and nationally.

Those comments suggest that there's no room to be complacent about water in Canada. That agenda of protecting water involves a broad range of interdisciplinary scientists, and that's why the AAAS is such a great opportunity. It allows us to bring the best scientists from around the world to engage in water security discussions and debates and we're actually doing three things at the AAAS. We've got a great session on water security looking at the links between water, energy and food security; particularly relevant given that the resource extractive intensification that we're observing here in Canada's West and a debate which need some really good science, I think, to help guide good decisions.

We've got great experts coming from the United Nations, their World Water Assessment Program, and Canada's Canada Excellence Research Chair in water security will also be there.

I'll have the opportunity to speak on my personal area of research interest and that's water privatization. And my topic of lecture will focus on to what extent privatization is a good or a bad thing and what impact it has on communities and the environment. And then on the Friday evening we'll be organizing a public session on water security to which you're all warmly invited, and that will focus on the Canadian context and we got some of British Columbia's and Canada's top water experts to talk to the audience about those issues.

I'll conclude on a personal note. I came to UBC 10 years ago after seven years at Oxford where I went on a Rhodes scholarship. And it was a big choice to come back to leave an international setting and return to Canada. And it's precisely these sorts of opportunities, the AAAS, that offer an international stage to Canadian researchers. They are incredibly valuable, very significant for what we do and a great chance to advance our research agendas, in my case on water and the environment. So I'm very grateful to the organizers and I look forward to the experience and hope to see you there.

Tim Meyer: Good. So be careful when you drink, take a glass of drinking water in the back there, it might be your last. So thank you, Karen. It's a glimpse of some of what's going to be available at the AAAS conference.

So one thing AAAS offers is an opportunity to actually meet the scientists, to actually have conversations with and learn from folks like Karen. So not only will the researchers meet one another and trade ideas and get inspired, but the rest of us can meet them too.

So to help facilitate this, Canada has organized a home base at the conference, something we call the Canadian Pavilion in the exhibit hall. This will not only showcase Canadian excellence in research but we're scheduling coffee breaks with some of Canada's top talent for conversations and interviews. So when you're at the conference, take a look for the Canada Pavilion, and I can hear people are already calling to be there.

So let me introduce our next speaker, a person probably also needs no introduction. Dr. Julio Montaner is the Director of the British Columbia Center for Excellence in HIV and AIDS, the Chair in AIDS Research and the head of the division of AIDS in the Faculty of Medicine at UBC, and Past President of the International AIDS Society. Dr. Montaner has another distinction. He is featured in Science Magazine's breakthrough of the year issue of December, 2011. We have copies available in the back and I can tell you that I'll be getting his autograph to put it next to my framed copy of the Olympic souvenir program. So, Dr. Montaner.

Dr. Julio Montaner: Thank you, Tim. It is a great pleasure to be here today to the launch of this hopefully one-month fever that will last forever. As Tim said, AAAS will likely increase the IQ of the City of Vancouver and the province of British Columbia, for that matter Canada, for a few days in February, but I hope that this one is going to have a lasting impact and is going to move us all forward in embracing evidence-based policymaking as we have been arguing for quite a long time, to make this world a better world.

The theme of the conference relates to flattening the curves and this is a theme that we embraced a long time ago, specifically when it comes to the fight against HIV and AIDS. We have an opportunity not just to flatten the curve of the growth of the epidemic, but actually get rid of it altogether. And it's not a hypothetical proposition on our part.

Already in 2006 we made a statement that we had a made-in-Canada, made-in-B.C. strategy that could actually eradicate HIV if properly put to work. And I'm really delighted, when you talk about [indiscernible] a gold mine, I don't know what else I can get out of the AAAS meeting but I'm delighted that Science Magazine has chosen this topic as the breakthrough of 2011. Only six years later, but it doesn't matter, I'll take it anyways.

Obviously, these things, they don't come in isolation. This is the result of the work by a large number of people here and elsewhere, and is in particular one clinical trial that has been highlighted in the issue where it has been shown in the hands of NIH funded investigators, that the strategy that we proposed of treating people with HIV with antiretroviral therapy, which by the way was partially discovered in British Columbia by our group, can decrease transmission of HIV by 96%. It doesn't get any better.

And I view the AAAS meeting as an incredible opportunity for us to use as a platform to build on these acknowledgments, the scientific development, so we can do what actually Karen is trying to do, I'm trying to do, I know Andrew is trying to do at Simon Fraser, [Steven Toupe] is trying to do at UBC and many of us are trying to do, which is to close the implementation gap.

And what that means is that we have a tremendous amount of knowledge that we generate in our laboratories, in our clinics, in our scientific endeavors, and yet when it comes to implementing that knowledge, we are always falling behind.

I would say that if we were to implement at least 30%, 40%, 50% of our scientific knowledge, we would be living

in a much better world. So from my perspective, what I would like to see coming out of AAAS is the inspiration for our people to embrace evidenced-based decision-making and moving us forward to use that knowledge to close the implementation gap so we can put our science to work so that we can flatten the curves, we make this a better world. Thank you.

Tim Meyer: Thank you, Julio, and that's a taste of what some of the types of discussions that will be at AAAS. So Dr. Montaner has also been selected to give one of the topical lectures which again is a platform for really sharing part of what Canada has discovered and uncovered and is proposing for global solutions.

So AAAS isn't just about Vancouver or British Columbia. It's really about Canada and Canadian science and scientists. It's about our country raising its hand and saying we're good, and in fact in some areas, we're actually really great. Really great. And we're going to keep doing what it takes to go for the gold. So hosting AAAS means that the rest of the world is recognizing that, that Canada isn't just number two or number three, but that we really are serious about going for number one in some key areas.

So here to say a few words about the national level is Ms. Wai Young. Ms. Young was elected to the House of Commons in 2011, where she represents the people of Vancouver South while working for Canadians anywhere. As a business owner and a community leader, she understands firsthand what it means to get a group of talented people into a room or a convention center and have them make a difference. Ms. Young.

Wai Young: Thank you for that lovely introduction, Tim. And I want to say that indeed, I just came back from Tokyo, Japan, where I intended on behalf of the federal government the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum, and we did talk about some pressing issues such as food security, economic, obviously the economic situation, and many, many other issues that were on the table.

So I truly do understand and recognize where when people come together in a room, things can happen. And

so therefore I'm really, really thrilled to be here this morning and I thank each of you for being here today at this very important event. It's a pleasure to be here today with you.

On behalf of the Government of Canada I would like to extend a warm welcome to the international science community attending next month's American Association for the Advancement of Science or AAAS as you've heard, annual conference in Vancouver. I can't tell you how honored and delighted that we are the AAAS has chosen Vancouver, Canada to host this meeting. I'm confident that this event will be as great a success as we experienced when Vancouver hosted Canada's 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, and we've all heard reference to that this morning.

With speakers from the world's top 200 universities and delegates from over 60 countries, next month's conference provides an unprecedented opportunity for more Canadian researchers to participate and to showcase their work to the world. The Government of Canada has been actively involved in the AAAS annual meetings for the last six years. This year we've united over 30 partners from across the science and tech community in Canada to bring Canada's best to the conference and to showcase our global contributions in science, technology and innovation as we've already heard.

More than 170 Canadian scientists are participating as speakers and lecturers in over 80 different sessions and panels. A Canada Pavilion will showcase how Canadians partner with the world to solve global issues. Our tagline for the conference, Partnership, Talent, and Innovation, as you've seen here, succinctly reflects all that Canada has to offer. This conference provides Canada with an ideal opportunity and on a big stage, to share what we have to offer with the international community, from state-of-the-art research infrastructure to visionary research teams ready to take on global challenges. Global partnerships and international collaboration are vital to Canada's competitiveness and to addressing these complex challenges.

Partnerships provide us with great opportunities to showcase our science, our technology, our innovations, our

performance and our Canadian abilities on the world stage. With state-of-the-art research facilities, significant R&D capacity and a global reputation for science excellence, Canada's science and technology base is one of the strongest in the world.

The Canadian innovation system, from governments to universities to industry, is becoming ever more attractive to the world's business community and is an ideal country in which to conduct research and development. At the AAAS conference we're putting a special emphasis on several clusters where we know that Canada is a world leader.

Our global health cluster reflects the important role which Canada has played in the past half century from a critical role in developing the polio vaccine to a leading role today in combating emerging global pandemics like SARS and the H1N1 flu. The changing planet cluster focuses on new technology and responsible environmental management. The big science cluster identifies and explores those big questions from tiny atoms to the stars of the universe. The digital cluster focuses on finding new ways to apply the potential of digital technology to new and creative applications. And finally, the people cluster, which emphasizes a multitude of programs and the diversity of people who drive Canada's excellence in research and innovation.

With these dynamic clusters, our pavilion and our increased Canadian presence, I am confident that Canada will make an important contribution. In addition, with Vancouver's natural beauty as we have already discussed, our many excellent restaurants and shops and our Canadian hospitality, I'm confident that the AAAS won't wait another 30 years to come back.

Again, bienvenue and welcome. On behalf of the Government of Canada, the Minister of International Trade and our Prime Minister, I'm very pleased to wish us a very productive, innovative and productive conference. Thank you.

Tim Meyer: Thank you, Wai. That's inspiring. So there's also the Province of British Columbia which is playing provincial host to this entire conference. So here to look at that scale of picture is Richard Lee. And Richard Lee has served the people of British Columbia as a member of the Legislative Assembly for Burnaby North since 2001. He's also now the Parliamentary Secretary for the Asia-Pacific initiative. He also has the distinction of having worked at TRIUMF, so afterwards I'll be asking him for advice on our main cyclotron. So, Richard?

Richard Lee: Thank you, Tim. It's always a pleasure to be introduced as someone from TRIUMF. It's a pleasure to be here today to represent the Government of British Columbia. We are honored that the American Association for the Advancement of Science is holding its world-renowned conference here next month. I understand it was our 2010 Winter Olympics that actually inspired the AAAS to choose Vancouver as the location for this year's event.

Last year we had blooming daffodils, bright sunshine, people in their shirtsleeves. Not like today. Although come to think about it, this wet weather actually would've been perfect for the games last year. So it would've saved us having to make our own snow but freezing millions of gallons of water to create acres of lakes was worth it to make the Olympics possible.

For example, to attract a conference like AAAS to British Columbia so that we didn't waste any money. So in less than a month, thousands of the world's best scientific brains will be gather here in Vancouver Convention Center. That includes leading researchers from British Columbia like Karen Bakker we just heard and Julio Montaner.

I think this is very smart and talented scientists who will help showcase the work going on in B.C., thank you very much. And work that is helping to solve some of the world's most challenging problems.

Our researchers will be joined by top scientists from the rest of Canada. You hear this morning, 140, more than

that maybe. But we also near 60 other countries so they will all be right here, which is terrific for B.C.'s young scientist of the future. They can go to Family Science Days as announced, two days, the free community showcase featuring hands-on demos and other family and kid-oriented activities.

But for the 20 lucky students with a special interest in science there is more. The B.C. Innovation Council is providing nearly \$19,000 to cover the admission to the full conference so they can learn more, as well as a year's membership to the AAAS. So there's two benefits.

So BCIC has partnered with TRIUMF Canada's National Laboratory for Particle and Nuclear Physics, to award scholarship. Some winners have already been chosen, including two Surrey students who are – are they here today? Anyone from Surrey? Oh, you're from Surrey? Good.

So two students, [Shakti Rakuma] and also [Nicholas Johnson] so thank you very much. And [Shakti] is a student, I would like to introduce her at [Kwantlen Secondary] who is very concerned about climate change. So she's been a member of the Team B.C. for the past two years at the Canada-wide science fair. One of her projects was a proposal for a hybrid house that could reduce energy consumption by working with nature.

[Nicholas] attends Semiahmoo Secondary. He did a fascinating experiment for the Canada-wide science fair a couple of years ago. He looked at data transmission through the roots of carrots and other vegetables, and he discovered that the fatter the carrot, the farther the data was transmitted. So that's very interesting. But you see that sideways or top-down? Or it doesn't matter. I'm sure that if [Nicholas] would like to eat the carrot too if possible.

But I'm not sure that he would do that.

But I'm sure, what I'm sure is that he and [Shakti] and the other 190 scholarship winners will learn a lot at this conference and I'm sure some of them will be inspired to make their own marks in the world of innovation. The

more young people we have experiencing the excitement of science and scientists.

Let me tell you a story, if I may. 40 years ago students from Britannia Secondary took a field trip to TRIUMF just for a field trip. So 42 years ago. And after graduation he worked in TRIUMF for 32 years. So this is me standing here. So a field trip can lead to a lot of inspiration later on.

So the more young people we have experiencing the excitement of science and scientists, the more we can encourage the innovation that keeps B.C. and Canada strong and growing, and to create jobs which is our government's key priority. I am looking forward to the AAAS conference and to the continuing discoveries of dedicated scientists here and around the world. Thank you.

Tim Meyer: Thank you, Richard, and wow, what a gift. Just to underscore that, the government of British Columbia is sponsoring membership in AAAS for a year and conference passes to the February conference for 200 students in British Columbia. So AAAS is not just a meeting, it's actually a global network of tens of thousands of scientists. And being a part of that is quite a privilege, and a real resource. So I personally want to thank the B.C. Innovation Council and the Government of British Columbia for taking the strong proactive stance towards science and our common future.

So to wrap up, what are we here for again? We're here for Canada and we're here to say something about the future. Science and technology inevitably and powerfully shape our lives and our destiny. With its great strengths in research, Canada is being recognized for driving and contributing to that global agenda. AAAS provides the place for those conversations.

So let me close by saying something personal. I'm actually an American, you can probably tell by my accent. I grew up in the suburbs of Chicago where Kmart was replaced by Wal-Mart and where dairy cows turned into Dairy Queens.

So when the opportunity came up five years ago to move to Canada and work at TRIUMF, it was a no-brainer. Vancouver, yes? Be in Vancouver and be a part of the Winter Olympic Games? Absolutely. My wife and I chose immediately.

And those types of wins keep coming. Move to Canada, work in research and innovation? Yes. Be there and be a part of AAAS 2012? Absolutely. This is a country, this is a province and this is a group of people who believe that the night sky is intrinsically fascinating and that it is important. Culturally important like Bard on the Beach, and it's important because it has the capacity to transcend; to cure cancer, to create jobs, to reduce our carbon footprint, to secure our future. To have Canadians create a future of choice, by choice, for their children and their grandchildren

So thank you all for coming, and thank you for thinking of Canada as a winner in partnership, talent, and innovation. On behalf of AAAS, on behalf of the conference co-chairs and on behalf of the rest of Canada, I invite you to join me at the AAAS meeting. You don't want to miss it. Thank you.

So we perhaps have time for one or two questions if there's something pressing, but I encourage you to approach the speakers afterwards. Okay, good. So thank you very much. We'll cut to our coffee break and I invite the speakers and the students for a photo opportunity by the whales. Thank you.