



**December 8, 2003**  
**For immediate release**

### **Advice about how to better manage wildfire risk in B.C.**

TORONTO, ONTARIO – The Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction is sharing a precautionary message with Canadians to permit a better understanding of wildfires.

“B.C. is growing increasingly vulnerable to wildfire damage,” said Paul Kovacs, Executive Director of the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction, as he appeared before the B.C. Firestorm 2003 Provincial Review in Vancouver. “This vulnerability to wildfire damage is increasing for three main reasons: more people and property are exposed to this peril as more people move into remote areas; there has been a general warming of the climate, which has increased the frequency of lightning strikes and the likelihood of extended periods of drought in some regions; and decades of active fire suppression have increased the fuel available to burn in several areas,” Mr. Kovacs testified.

“Canadians can better manage wildfire risk and can better mitigate the impact of wildfire damage through a threefold approach: public education surrounding wildfire management efforts; research to identify tax, insurance, and other incentives to encourage better risk management by property owners; and an enhanced role for the provincial and federal governments in the promotion of improved land use practices and the provision of adequate resources for wildfire management,” says Kovacs. “For more information on better preparing yourself and your property for wildfires, please visit ICLR's website at [www.iclr.org](http://www.iclr.org),” he adds. “ICLR's website offers tips regarding simple non-structural steps that improve the resistance of Canadian homes to fires of any kind. At the website you will also learn what you should include in a disaster safety kit, along with other helpful hints.”

Hundreds of forest fires raged through British Columbia this past summer and the devastation caused by the persistent fires destroyed over 300 homes. While homeowners are ultimately responsible for protecting their property, the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction offers Canadians an opportunity to improve their chances of surviving a wildfire by taking precautions.

Established in 1998 by Canada's property and casualty insurers, ICLR is an independent, not-for-profit research institute based in Toronto and at the University of Western Ontario in London, Canada. ICLR is a centre of excellence for disaster loss prevention research and education. ICLR's research staff is internationally recognized for pioneering work in a number of fields including wind and seismic engineering, atmospheric sciences, water resources engineering and economics. Multi-disciplined research is a foundation for ICLR's work to build communities more resilient to disasters.

For further information, please contact: Glenn McGillivray, Managing Director, ICLR, tel. 416/364-8677, ext. 3216, fax 416/364-5889, [gmcgillivray@iclr.org](mailto:gmcgillivray@iclr.org)