

Bill Bennett was re-elected to represent the riding of Kootenay East on May 12, 2009 and previously served as Minister of Community and Rural Development and the Minister of Energy, Mines, and Petroleum Resources.

Bill was first elected to represent the riding of East Kootenay in 2001 and re-elected in 2005. He was previously appointed Minister of Tourism, Culture and the Arts on June 23, 2008, and Minister of State for Mining on June 16, 2005.

Previously, Bill was Chair of the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services, a member of the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth, and chair of the B.C. Outdoor Caucus. Bill also served as the government leader on the Parliamentary Select Standing Committee on Public Accounts. In addition, he served as deputy chair of the Legislative Select Standing Committee on Crown Corporations. As a rural MLA, Bill's caucus committee focus has been on natural resource issues, having participated on committees dealing with mining, forestry, agriculture and land use.

Before being elected, Bill was a partner in a Cranbrook law firm. In 1976, he earned an honours degree in English from the University of Guelph and in 1992, at the age of 42, a law degree from Queen's University. Bill owned and operated fly-in wilderness lodges in the Northwest Territories and Manitoba from 1977 to 1993. Bill served as president of the Cranbrook Chamber of Commerce in 1997 and 1998 and was incoming chair of the BC Chamber of Commerce in 2000 when he took the plunge into provincial politics. Bill was twice elected Cranbrook Business Person of the Year and served as president of the Kootenay Bar Association.

Bill and his wife Beth married in 1974 and have two sons, Dylan and Daniel. Bill is a passionate snowboarder who enjoys the outdoors by hunting, fishing and hiking in the Canadian Rockies.