From: ***PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS REMOVED***
Sent: Friday, April 30, 2010 8:11:53 AM
To: Living Water Smart ENV:EX
Subject: Water Modernization Submission

Ministry of Environment

Water Stewardship Division

PO Box 9362

Stn Prov Govt

Victoria, BC, V8W 9M2

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am pleased that government is considering modernizing the Water Act. Recently, our group, the Arrowsmith Parks and Land-Use Council, submitted the following recommendations to the City of Parksville, the Town of Qualicum Beach and the Regional District of Nanaimo regarding the protection of our watershed in the Oceanside area and the Englishman River system in particular. I believe that these recommendations could easily be generalised to other similar watersheds throughout British Columbia and should be entrenched in the Water Act.

Thank you for your consideration,

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WATER SOURCE PROTECTION

Recommendations:

A. Take immediate action

Protect our drinking water source areas for residents of

the Town of Qualicum Beach, City of Parksville

and relevant areas of the Regional District of Nanaimo:

1) Seek a Ministerial Order under the Government Actions Regulation from the Minister of Agriculture and Lands to establish a moratorium on logging in the Suzuki-defined riparian strip of the Englishman River, the Little Qualicum River, and around the Arrowsmith Lake reservoir until such time as a drinking water protection plan can be developed.

2) Request our Provincial Health Officer to recommend the development of a Drinking Water Protection Plan under BC's Drinking Water Protection Act, and to apply to the Minister of Healthy Living and Sport (HL&S) to mandate the formation of such a plan. Under the Act, such a mandate from the Minister would enable our region to begin a transparent, broad-based, inclusive community planning process. The completed plan would go to cabinet and, when approved, would become regulation.

The initiation of this planning process would require broad-based community support.

3) Begin regular, systematic, scientifically-comparable sampling and testing of the source water to measure changing trends at specific points in the river.

4) Establish a joint citizens' advisory committee on water protection to support and advise the Arrowsmith Water Service.

5) Establish a new drinking water intake sufficiently upstream to better defend against pollution from all sources.

B. Seek long term protection and

equality with other communities in BC

1) Join with other towns to form a multi-member Water Supply Commission composed of representatives from all local governments within the E&N Land Grant area to:

a) share water supply concerns and problems related to ownership of watersheds, and

b) draw up a Source Protection Best Practices Plan, and

c) Acquire funds for implementing the plan by seeking a provincial government commitment to equalize water source protection capabilities across the province,

regardless of watershed ownership.

An effective watershed plan

--must prepare for likely climate change impacts on the source area, such as changes in the frequency, timing and quantity of peak runoff events, changes in seasonality, and decreased summer streamflow.

--must make watershed decisions based on future models, not past facts – that is, consider future, not present costs and threats (including social and other indirect costs) when planning water service.

--must attempt to assess carrying capacity of a source area for possible population growth while maintaining high-functioning ecosystems and ecosystem services.

2) Make a commitment to sustainable forestry and sustainable forestry jobs within healthy ecosystems capable of servicing our water source areas by helping to create an ecosystem-based forestry plan for the Englishman River and Little Qualicum River.

In partnership with the Mount Arrowsmith Biosphere Foundation, the Regional District of Nanaimo, Vancouver Island University, and other suitable agencies, initate the formation of a plan for ecosystem-based industrial forestry in these watersheds with water quality as the foremost consideration. The plan should contain site-specific parameters for sustainable forestry.

3) We must continue,

a) Demanding no harvesting or industrial forestry in the Suzuki-defined riparian zone of a community drinking watershed anywhere in BC, and

b) Demanding fair and equal water source protection for drinking water source areas located in private resource land as compared to drinking watersheds on Crown land in the rest of BC.