From: ***PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS REMOVED***
Sent: Thursday, April 29, 2010 4:53:35 PM
To: Living Water Smart ENV:EX
Subject: Fwd: Modernization of the water act

Begin forwarded message:

From: ***PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS REMOVED***

Date: April 29, 2010 9:06:25 AM PDT

To: livingwatersmart@gov.bc.ca

Subject: Modernization of the water act

To whom it May Concern,

Regarding Modernization of the Water Act –

The eight principles as they are written are fine. It is in their implementation that more discussion and input is needed:

I am unclear on what is meant by "higher economic good" - the access to basic human needs should be right, allocation should not be based simply on who pays more get more - otherwise you may end up with a situation where things are grown for the export market that compromise local consumption needs - allocation has to be dealt with in a more holistic valued setting where economic value is one element - but others might include, environment, aesthetics, human needs, issues of self reliance, social needs, etc. Being such a cross cutting issue water cannot be dealt with in a single analysis such as dollar value.

I support that the - Government will regulate groundwater. It is vitally important. However, it should NOT be limited to priority areas – clearly it can start with priority areas, but it should be through out the Province because some interests may argue that it is not yet a priority! We need to be proactive.
Remove priority areas only from the dialogue - it goes against a precautionary approach.

I support: Dealing with existing ground water use that began before legislation: regulation must done on all water use and extraction. It is not possible to limit only those coming after. We are all in this together.

I support a review of the principles we have regarding allocation, and in particular a review of “First in time, First in rights”. This is archaic and needs to be re-organised to address issues of priority use. It is very difficult to determine, but essential for our continued “best use” of a public resource. This priniciple is well established under international law when states are discussing water resources, why should we not apply it at local levels also. The discussion paper is vague on what is being proposed.

I support protecting stream health and aquatic environments.
Specifically, - recognizing the legitimate use of water by the ecosystems, and in general priority of use with other values – except use for basic human needs – (basic human needs includes sanitation and consumption for sustenance and cooking; not watering the watering the lawn, or filling the swimming pool - these are ‘additional domestic needs’). Balance must be sought with the production of food etc, if food production is deemed ‘efficient use of water’ – growing alfalfa in the desert should NOT be viewed as ‘efficient’ use of water resources. Etc.
-Adaptive management – Good
-Claw-back on licenses – in times of water restriction - yes. (apart from basic domestic use)
-Licensees required to monitor – depending on size of extraction-yes. Ideally, all would be monitored but it will take time - phase in the process.

I support a review of water governance arrangements, particularly looking towards the principles of the EU Directive for inspiration. However, there are generally much better information systems in place within the EU for monitoring and information gathering, which are lacking in BC. We must develop arrangements which suit our ability to manage and be flexible to adapt as we gain more information regarding our resource.

Point to Note the diagrams which discuss water use in BC are somewhat misleading and need clarification. Most people assume ‘water use’ to be consumptive – my bath, my garden, agriculture, etc. Most water use for power generation is non-consumptive (although it alters hydraulic timing, and some have inter-basin transfers etc., but basically non-consumptive). To say the 95% of water use in BC is for power generation is therefore misleading.

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