From: ***PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS REMOVED***
Sent: Friday, April 30, 2010 9:20:02 AM
To: Living Water Smart ENV:EX
Subject: Submission: Water Act Modernization

Hello,

As a member of the ***PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS REMOVED***and former member of the community's Water Council---a multi-stakeholder group for all Island water issues, funded by the CRD, Islands Trust & North Salt Spring Waterworks District.

A growing groundwater problem in the Gulf Islands is failing wells. Each year the volume of trucked water sales increases and with it the looming question whether adjacent Water Districts are responsible for providing service.
If there was an abundance of surface water storage this might not be a problem, but there is not. We have four small surface water drinking lakes each of which is close to or already at sustainable capacity. With long dry summers and peaking demand this will only get worse with climate change and population growth.

Currently people considering drilling wells are require a permit from MOE and well drillers are provincially regulated. 'Proof of water' is required by CRD Building Inspections before construction begins. As you know 'proof of water' is time and site specific. What is at that spot today may not be there forever. The total capacity of any local aquifer is not well known or understood nor the interplay with seawater tables. (New) neighbours interrupting flow to existing users is an expected outcome if densities are not well understood.

My suggestion: Existing well owners, prospective property buyers and well drillers be given a clear caveat, that 'proof of water' and permission to build does NOT guarantee perpetual supply and that the owner assumes this responsibility completely. Provide them with alternative educational information. eg rainwater catchment, grey water recycling, water conservation specifics.
The buying/planning/pre-construction stage is the ideal time, occasionally the only time to consider these questions and their cost effectiveness. For example, concrete perimeter walls around new buildings, especially those on acreages, also make ideal structures
for the beginning of outside rainwater/greywater holding tanks, located below ground where water storage and temperature conditions are ideal, and are ideally located close to the point of use.

Clearly rural community drinking water agencies cannot supply or be expected to be responsible for groundwater supply guarantees. The provincial government does not and will not have all the answers either. Hence buyer must beware and be educated.

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