From: ***PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS REMOVED***
Sent: Wednesday, April 28, 2010 11:03:57 AM
To: Living Water Smart ENV:EX
Subject: Water Modernization Submission

PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS REMOVED
April 27,2010

Water Modernization Submission
Ministry of Environment
Water Stewardship Division
PO Box 9362
Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC, V8W 9M2

Dear Sir or Madam:

I was lucky to attend the Water Modernization Workshop in Nanaimo to discuss the proposed changes with others. I am very pleased that government is considering modernizing the Water Act, however I am concerned about some issues that have been omitted in the discussion paper. Other attendees agreed with me on these concerns.

Goal one: Protecting stream health and aquatic environments

Water Act starts with stream protection but needs to consider watershed protection. The act talks about stream health and allocation of water, but needs to look at the natural heritage features as vital components of the watershed ecosystem and their relation to other elements such as water quality and quantity. Stream health and adequate stream flow are dependant on the removal of vegetation and other human activities. As you are well aware, after logging or types of development causes rapid runoff after rainfall and rapid decrease in stream flow during summer droughts in summer dry spells. Adequate natural vegetation riparian zones are needed to protect stream health and keep water cool for fish and other aquatic life forms. Bulrushes and other wetland plants filter out contaminants in runoff water. In Ontario, this vegetative protection zone is a minimum of 30 metres in built up areas and 100 metres outside settlement areas.

Goal two: Improve governance arrangements

Governance must include a Ministry of Water as well as some local government control. Public participation is essential. Water management must include monitoring of surface and ground levels and useage. Please see comments in goal four.

Goal three: Introduce more flexibility and efficiency in the water allocation system

Water is a right, not a commodity. Water should not be exported or removed from a watershed area. Let’s consider water as necessary for all forms of life, which is no different that air we breath. If we consider it a commodity the Americans will take it from us and leave Canadians without adequate water resources in a rapidly warming and drying world. Agricultural water and essential domestic use should come before many uses to build a local sustainable economy. Local food growing must be higher priority than using to make pretty gardens and green lawns. Exporting bulk and bottled water need to stopped. First-in-time first-in right need to be reassessed especially where shortages are possible. The precautionary principle is needed in the allocation of water. Eventually there will be not enough

clean water to meet the demand. A complete review of44,000 active water licences in BC don’t have expiry dates, and almost a free right to use water. This practice needs to be based on priority use.

Goal four: Regulate groundwater and use

Ground water mapping should be done and monitoring/ metering at monitoring wells. There is no protection of surface water at present which recharges ground water aquifers, eg wetlands. All wetlands need to be preserved from logging and any other human development to help recharge these aquifers with clean water. Need good data on well drilling, existing well useage, then land use planning and zoning. Priority of water use for agriculture and essential domestic needs during droughts.

In conclusion, water is a right, not a commodity. Water should not be exported or removed from a watershed area. I hope that the above issues can be carefully considered in the new water act.

Yours sincerely

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