From: ***PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS REMOVED***
Sent: April-27-10 1:33 PM
To: Living Water Smart ENV:EX
Subject: WAM - Response
Attachments: BC Water Act April 2010 _2_.pdf

Here is my submission,

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Here is my opinion about proposed changes to the Water Act

On April 16th I attended the WAM meeting in Nelson.

I am about to turn 70 and have lived in the Slocan valley all my life on a farm my grandfather settled in 1901.

When I was about four years old or so I remember my father had about an acre in strawberries. He hired local Doukhobor ladies to pick them. The berries would be put into wooden pails. Every day these pails would be put on Bill Anderson's truck to be taken to MacDonald's Jam factory in Nelson. Bill Anderson owned Slocan Motor Freight. He would bring back the empty pails every night. There were other strawberry farms. One by one they went out of business because they were not getting paid enough for their strawberries. Then MacDonald went out of the jam business and went into soda pop.

At this time the logging industry here consisted of small operators who logged small timber sales and did not log very high up the mountains. We did not see a threat to our water.

When I was still a teenager I can remember there was a pound in our part of the valley. If someone's cattle or horses got out and into their neighbor's property they could be rounded up and put in the pound. A fine would be charged to the owner before he could take them home. Mr. Honeysett, the local justice of the peace, was the pound keeper.

At that time just about every little farm had at least one milk cow. Every morning a cream can with the owner's name painted on it would be put out on the road for Bill Anderson to pick up. Every night he would drop them off at the same spot. At the end of the month there would be a little cream cheque.

There were two creameries in Nelson, Palm Dairy and Kootenay Coop. At some point Kootenay Coop burnt down and went out of business. Eventually Palm Dairies announced they were no longer accepting cream. Then some time later Palm shut down their Nelson plant. Also at the same time the larger dairy farms, what with more and more rules, were regulated into extinction one by one.

Back in the 1960's I could send soil samples to a government lab in the Okanagan to be tested for pH and nutrient levels. There was no charge. Since then this has been cancelled.

About this time large transnational corporations moved in and started logging huge areas and higher elevations with huge equipment. They began logging faster as the trees grew smaller. They began moving into domestic watersheds.

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Ever since we, the rural people of British Columbia have been fighting an uphill battle for what we believe has been an unconscionable fraud on our water rights. Furthermore there is overwhelming evidence against such logging practices.

Back in the 1970's we had a district agriculturist stationed in Creston. One agriculturist back then actually came to my farm to help me get started in fighting the knapweed along our roadsides. He also put out a little newsletter from time to time. I remember in one where he was concerned about the decreasing organic levels in the soil on the Creston flats.

We had one artificial inseminator in our district back in the 60's and 70's. John DeJong, upon receiving a phone call, would travel anywhere in the district to inseminate our cows. This would be quite an undertaking because a cow has to be inseminated the same day that she is seen to be in heat. Since John died there has been no inseminator.

Before I was born there was a Farmer's Institute in this valley.

As every one who has farmed knows, the cost of farming has outstripped income. When I first started raising beef, the price per pound dressed was about a dollar. A 50 lb. block of salt was two dollars. Today dressed beef is about two/fifty. The same block of salt is eight dollars. A roll of barbwire was $8. Now it is more than $60.

The main cause of the demise of farming in the Slocan is fairly simple. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure it out or maybe even a politician for that matter. Food is brought in from somewhere else cheaper than can be raised here. Cheap transportation from cheap oil. Cheap transportation also would bring food from far enough places where there would also be cheap labor. Some of this food came from far away enough to arrive here when our food would not be available because we are in the middle of winter.

Cheap oil also would fuel bigger farm machinery to run on bigger farms. Cheap oil would produce insecticides, herbicides and chemical fertilizers.

It is well known that on these big agribiz farms more calories from fossil fuels is spent to produce our food than the calories we can get out of that food.

I have a book:

SOIL AT RISK
Canada's Eroding Future

A Report on Soil Conservation by the Standing Committee
on Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry, to the Senate of Canada.
Hon. H.O. Sparrow, Chairman.

Here are a few excerpts:

New practices and technology, such as the use of monoculture and large, heavy machinery contribute to loss of organic matter, soil compaction and erosion.

In these days of high costs and low commodity prices, the least expensive way to operate is often the only way a farmer can survive.

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This is soil that belongs to our children and its loss guarantees they cannot be as prosperous as we are regardless of all the fancy footwork of economists, tax experts, chemists and agricultural experts.

The facts and figures in this report are presented to call all Canadians to action ---- to show that soil degradation has become a national problem requiring national attention.

This book was published in 1984. I found this book in a used bookstore recently. As a farmer, I was aware of the soil problem but I did not hear of this book. In the 1980's I did not hear of any call to action as called for by this book.

I think that the call for action by this book never happened because it was not in the interest of the corporate world.

Please excuse me if I seem to be rambling but I strongly believe this all ties in to water.

This new law, making it illegal for farmers to butcher an animal and sell it to their neighbors, is a blatant example of our government who is "out for business"; out for corporate interests actually.

I'm pleased to hear that Corky Evans doesn't agree with this law.

It is clear to those people who are aware, that whenever a law like this is passed 'for public safety' it is the corporate world that benefits.

I think that a local abattoir will still be problematic to the local farmer. There will be the added cost to the farmer of transporting the animals to this establishment. Will that be the only expense? There will be greater stress to the animal (shipping fever). As soon as an animal is taken from their home environment the stress starts right there. Furthermore abattoirs have inherent sanitation problems. That is more expense. I think this is a band-aid solution because as I outlined above the economic problems for farmers is deeper and more far-reaching.

There will be worse trouble ahead for everyone as more problems keep arising. I have been reading recently about our infrastructure collapsing here in North America (probably everywhere). Water supply, sewers, highways and bridges, garbage disposal; the list goes on.

I attended the Food Conference in Nelson in November 2007. There is great concern for the future of food here in this province. The consensus at that meeting was clear; the corporate world won't be solving it.

With today's turn of events it is becoming clear that the worst thing about these big agribiz farms is that they are unecological. It follows logically that because they are not ecologically sound they are not sustainable. Because they are not sustainable they will be found to be uneconomical.

Today most farmers are struggling; even those on those big farms.

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My advice for the future might be this: If you are not a farmer you better find one for a friend and you better go out and help him. It might be necessary to relearn simpler farming skills as the infrastructure breaks down. Learning to hunt and gather wild food will not be a bad idea. Much as the corporate world tries to destroy it, we must all strive to relearn and restore our sense of small community.

I was pleased to see at the WAM meeting that our community is still aware and is still well informed as to what is going on. We know that another fraud is being foisted upon us.

We all feel that the Water Act should supercede the power of other ministries:

That the control of our watersheds should be largely in the hands of our communities,

That fish and the environment including climate change should be considered,

That logging should be put on hold until the above considerations are met with,

That the "modernization" be put on hold until the above considerations are met with.

Because of previous experiences with our governments I have no illusions to the outcome of this "modernization".

I know that our province is a city-state with power coming from the center. I know that we of the hinterlands are the hewers of wood and the drawers of water. Our hinterlands are a source for the withdrawal of resources.

None of this is sustainable. History has shown this.

I just shake my head.

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