From: ***PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS REMOVED***
Sent: April-29-10 11:20 AM
To: Living Water Smart ENV:EX; Botelho, Zita ENV:EX
Cc: ***PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS REMOVED***
Subject: Emailing: WAM letter
Attachments: WAM letter _2_.pdf

Date: Apr 29, 2010 PM
Subject: Modernization of the Water Act

To Whom it May Concern,

I would like to comment on your initiative to "modernize" the water act (WAM).

My family lives in the Slocan Valley and we have a Domestic and Irrigation License. Our business involves assisting community groups assess and monitor flow on local creeks and we test water quality. We have also worked with the Provincial Government to obtain data for eventual use in establishing Water Quality Objectives. In addition, we work with Environment Canada through the CABIN program to assess stream health.

I attended the WAM workshop in Nelson on April 6th and want to comment on the need to modernize the Water Act and the goals presented at that workshop.

In our 15 years of experience in working with provincial government agencies we have seen a decline in their water protection/regulation policy. And, a decline in their ability to work with local citizens and citizens initiatives that would assist govt. agencies. It seems to me, this is partly due to lack of coordination/clear lines of authority between government departments (especially between Forestry and Environment), poorly functioning systems within agencies and, lack of staff.

Does this mean the water act needs modernization? Clearly, that depends on Governments intent.

If your intent is to improve governance (Goal 2) - clear lines of authority between government agencies would sure help. Citizens at the workshop were clear - we want water protection given highest authority.

Efficiency is an issue (Goal 3). Here, I suggest you modernize the Ministry of Environment Database (SEAM). Your current archaic data storage/management system creates a huge inefficiency and makes it difficult for staff, inter-agencies, & the public to work with govt.

Stream health and protection is clearly an issue that involves support/involvement from the Public.

There is an initiative through the Columbia Basin Trust called the Water Monitoring Network. Consistent participation and assistance from provincial government staff is missing and would be appreciated.

However, if govt.'s intent with the WAM is to reduce government's role in water related issues, reduce costs, and "appear" to be consulting and therefore appeasing the public, then it makes sense to continue cutting staff at government agencies.

Our provincial government's action "on the ground" is where it counts and with the recent cuts, I am concerned that the intent in "modernization" is, in fact, something like a "Results based" Forest Practices Code which quickly devolved into no code at all.

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