From: ***PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS REMOVED***
Sent: Thursday, April 29, 2010 6:26:51 AM
To: Living Water Smart ENV:EX
Subject: Re: Water Act Modernization- Discussion Paper Feedback

Submitted on 04/29/2010 - 07:26
Submitted by anonymous user: [65.38.34.253]

Submitted values are:

Postal Code: ***PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS REMOVED***
Comments:
Dear Minister Penner
Re; BC's Water Act.
I am glad that the Water Act is being re-visited, and that now the oppurtunity arises to alter some of it's mandate and definitions in light of modern knowledge.

The new reworded act must address the following:

- The precautionary principle must be applied to the Water Act to protect ecosystem and watershed health.

- The Water Act must be the overriding piece of legislation that determines what is able to occur in watersheds. Currently the Act does not protect stream, ecosystem or watershed health.

- Government needs systems in place for accountability and for education around water conservation.

- Riparian Area Regulation (RAR) assessments must be conducted under regional or municipal legislation. There should be a penalty in place for regional districts/municipalities that don’t comply with RAR legislation.

- The Water Act needs to recognize wetlands and their critical processes.

- The Water Act must inform, interact and be inclusive of all functions and levels of government, including other pieces of legislation such as the Drinking Water Protection Act, the Land Act, the Fisheries Act, among others. There must be a holistic approach to ecosystem management.

- The Act needs to be built around logical watershed boundaries, not political boundaries. Management and planning needs to happen closer to where the water is actually being used, with meaningful community involvement in the decision making process. I would like to see Regional Water Boards with multi-stakeholder involvement and adequate funding in place for board members with no government downloading.

- Community relationships that have already been established around water issues need to be leveraged for water allocation decisions.

- Bill 30 rulings need to be reversed, allowing local governmental bodies to have meaningful input.

- Water license applications need to have an expiry date, so that private industry can’t hold onto water rights.

- We must have a licensing/permitting system that prioritizes water uses, such as ecosystem and domestic uses above irrigation uses for golf courses and lawns.

- First in Time, First in Rights system needs to have restrictions under low flow conditions and this must be enforced.

- The impacts of climate change must be taken into consideration, including an assessment of how it will impact the ability to meet ecosystem and domestic needs.

- Groundwater extraction and use must be regulated for all large withdrawals and the word ‘large’ must be clearly defined.

- Of particular importance, Oil and Gas exploration companies must have to pay for all water uses and must be responsible for tracking how much groundwater they extract and use.

In addition, it is essential that the public be involved at all levels for this modernization process as it moves forward. Currently, there is a lack of public input opportunities beyond this initial comment period. I also ask that there be a clear commitment from the province for funding the implementation of Water Act changes.

In Closing: Thank you .

The results of this submission may be viewed at:
PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS REMOVED