From: ***PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS REMOVED***
Sent: Thursday, April 29, 2010 3:47:39 PM
To: Living Water Smart ENV:EX
CC: OfficeofthePremier, Office PREM:EX; Minister, ENV ENV:EX; Mungall.MLA, Michelle LASS:EX; Conroy.MLA, Katrine LASS:EX; Slater.MLA, John LASS:EX; Atamanenko.A@parl.gc.ca
Subject: WAM comment submission

To whom it may concern,

First and foremost the new Water Act should involve the citizens of B.C. at all stages of its development. The government should present an opportunity for the general public to comment on the draft of the new Water Act once the draft has been written.

Concerns voiced by citizens who attended the Water Act Modernization conference in Nelson include:

* In allocation, ecosystem needs come first, followed by a modified version of FITFIR that acknowledges the need for setting priorities and sharing the resource where water scarcity arises

* We want strong standards in place, which are also enforced, for protecting water, stream health, wetlands and watersheds. Standards should be set by transparent public process. Funding needs to be available to enforce standards.

* The scope of the Water Act needs to be broadened to include land use (for instance resource extraction activities) since you can't protect the water without considering the land.

* 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.

* The Water Act should not devolve uses and protections to other acts (Section 9 of the Water Act devolves water protection to various other Ministries Acts (Forestry, Mining, Gas & Oil))

* The province needs to put a priority on water conservation rather than allocation and supply management.

* Watershed Reserves must be re-established for source protection from forestry and other resource extraction activities. Watershed reserves would protect our drinking water supplies.

* Collaborative science, traditional knowledge and local history should inform all allocation decisions. The precautionary principle should be functioning at all times (no harm proof prior to new uses, not mitigation after damage). First Nations social and cultural practices associated with water must be respected and accommodated.

* Avoid an emphasis on market mechanisms in allocating water - priorities need to be set by communities first

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

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