From: ***PERSONAL IDENTIFIERS REMOVED***
Sent: Thursday, April 29, 2010 9:15:38 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; Bennett.MLA, Bill LASS:EX; Slater.MLA, John LASS:EX; Atamanenko.A@parl.gc.ca
Subject: Water act comments

To the Living Water Smart folks,

In response to the request for public comment for the development of a new water act for BC please consider the following remarks: First and foremost the new Water Act must involve the citizens of B.C. at all stages of its development. The government must present an opportunity for the general public to comment on the draft of the new Water Act once the draft has been written. This request is an excellent first step but the work is not done yet.

I support the concerns voiced by citizens who attended the recent Water Act Modernization conference in Nelson which include:

* Establishing strong standards, which are also enforced, for protecting water, stream health, wetlands and watersheds.
* 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 (new uses need to prove they are not harmful prior to being approved, not offer mitigation after damage).
* First Nations social and cultural practices associated with water must be respected and accommodated.
* The Water Act needs to recognize and protect wetlands and their critical processes.
* The Water Act needs to recognize the right of non-human species to adequate water.

Thank you for considering these critical concerns and acting on them

Sincerely,

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