

Sent: Wednesday, April 21, 2010 4:25 PM
To: Living Water Smart ENV:EX
Subject: Water Act Modernization Discussion Paper Feedback

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by
() on 2010 04 21, at 16:24:58

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Principles_Support: Support

Principles_Comments: No land - no food! No water - no food! This province treats the agricultural sector shamefully! The ALR was a great idea, but the government did nothing to include water usage in that plan. As a rancher in this province, I see very little in the way of protection of water for crops and livestock. Livestock production is a large part of the food supply, livestock on the ranch and on the range need water just as much as the wildlife, therefore the access to water for livestock must be recognized as an essential and legitimate use. Without agriculture we have no food supply, without a food supply within the borders of this province we have no province - check out history - no nation, no state, no civilization has ever lasted that has depended on a foreign food supply. Agriculture should be listed in an independent category along with what the government has listed :first nations, stakeholders, and the public. (Why are first nations separate from the "public" or the "stakeholders"-they are people involved in both business as "stakeholders" and as individual members of the "public") "Fully 70% of water used by residential water in southern California is used outside the home for lawns, pools and other niceties" (National Geographic -April 2010 - Water Issue - page 145) and I am sure it is quite possible that most residential areas in this country are not far off that figure when it comes to water usage. So why is agriculture supposed to take the blows - we provide the food that feeds the nation, yet the millions who live in the urban and suburban areas, who depend on us to feed them, do not want to change their own wasteful habits - instead expecting the suburban and rural farmers to take the blow - yet these are the

same people who complain about high food prices - etc. Protect the food supply and you will protect the water supply - Agriculture wastes very little water - water goes onto the crops, and into the livestock -

what is not used goes back into the ground recharges aquifers,

or

seeps straight back into the rivers and streams it came out of (keeping the water temperatures cool for fish as well), not only that, but agricultural land - especially pasture land for livestock grazing - provides habitat for all manner of wildlife - from birds to bears. The ecological goods and services provided by agricultural lands are far greater than most people realize. I question the government's motives, considering the fact that this very government is now planning to put a 3rd dam on the Peace River, flooding agricultural land, wildlife habitat, and destroying thousands of hectares of nature - all to provide energy for the gas fields and tar sands - yet they have a new "water plan" designed to protect the very ecological values they are so ready to destroy for a few quick bucks?

Goal1_Support: Support

Goal1_Comments: Human needs must come first and that includes agricultural needs.

EnviroFlow: Guidelines

EnviroFlow_Comments: I do not think that there should be hard and fast rules regarding water usage as water levels change from year to year as does climate. Case by case, individual problems should be solved by thorough involvement with all parties that directly use the particular water resource in question.

WaterAllocationPlan: Optional

DecisionMaker: Must Consider

DecisionMaker_Comments: Whatever options there are - Agricultural use must be protected.

WaterAllocationPlan_Conditions: All water allocation plans must provide for and protect water for agricultural use - especially for those lands locked into the ALR system.

DumpingProhibition: Maintain

Goal2_Support: Support

Goal2_Comments: Again provisions for agriculture, especially water for crops and the right for livestock to access water on the farm and on the range must be part of this plan. Water management should be at a local level because centralized management never works - Victoria does not know the issues and needs of those in the rest of the province.

Goal2_Options: Shared

GovernanceFundingSolutions: In the Agricultural sector - reasonable funding should be made available to upgrade and modernize water systems. For example going from a ditch irrigation system to a piped system.

Accountability: Obviously, it is a must that big business such as oil, gas, mining and logging simply can't trump agricultural use just because those sectors are more important to the government than protecting the food supply.

BenefitsOfSharedRoles: Water sharing at a local level (as long as all stakeholders - I use this term to include all residential city/town dwellers and rural farmers/ranchers - are allowed to have meaningful input) is beneficial because everyone will feel part of the system, but only if agriculture is included on an equal footing with the public (which includes First Nations) stakeholders (industry - logging, mining, gas & oil, manufacturing etc.

Goal3_Support: Support

Goal3_Comments: Although I support this initiative, I am troubled when I hear what happened to ranchers in the Merritt area last year. Immediate human use is listed first in the water act, then environment, then all other uses. Agricultural use is an immediate human need - and should be in the first category not listed with all other uses.

WaterUseEfficiency_1: Codes for efficient infrastructure and practices

WaterUseEfficiency_2: Use of incentives and economic instruments

AdminEfficiencyOptions_PermittedUse: Permitted use different

AdminEfficiencyOptions_SelfReg: Voluntary self-registration

PermittedUseConsiderations: Livestock access to drinking water especially for livestock on crown range -As for controls - range use plans already have the # of head a permit has, however identifying areas that have water, who has permits to use that water, and ways to mitigate problems - although already addressed by forestry & range - could be enhanced but not at the expense of the farmer/ranchers ability to use the water.

AdminEfficiencyOptions_WaterUse: Combine admin and efficiency

Flexibility_Support: Strongly Support

WaterAllocationSystem_Options: FITFIR

WaterAllocationSystem_Comments: The problem of priority of use is that it will backbench agriculture in almost every area - simply because the number of farmers/ranchers in this province is so small (yet we feed the majority of people) That majority is urban residents and since their numbers are so high - agriculture will suffer. Also industrial water use will be considered higher priority than agriculture simply because of the amount of money generated.

WaterScarcityTemporary_Options: Priority date

WaterScarcityTemporary_Comments: Most farmland has water rights dating back many years and the FITFIR system is probably the only way to protect agricultural water supplies. Unfortunately A & B listed above would probably undermine water usage for agricultural purposes since agriculture appears to be a very low priority in this province.

WaterScarcityPermanent_Options: Water Management Planning upon request

Goal4_Support: Neutral

Goal4_Comments: My level of support for this initiative depends on what regulations would be in place and how it would affect agricultural use in this province.

Thresholds_Options: 250+100

Thresholds_Comments: Agriculture uses a lot of water, more in drier areas than wetter areas - making a small threshold for groundwater use may be detrimental to farms/ranches.

PriorityAreas_Options: Combine priority areas

AtRiskWatershedCriteria: Monitoring - people on the ground, in the field that have experience with ALL water users - for example people who know what cattle damage is and what it isn't. Also testing the water for damage - ecoli - just because cattle or animals are present does not mean that they are endangering the watersheds.

AffectOnCommunity: I know that agriculture will suffer - it is already suffering under the current system, however the modernization act does not prioritize agriculture either, in fact many of the proposals will make it worse for those who feed this province.

Improve_InterestsTakenIntoAccount: 1) List Agriculture as being as important as basic human consumption needs.
2) Agriculture should have a separate priority category - not listed as just "stakeholders" - government has "First Nations" as a separate entity - Agriculture should be too.
3) Ensure access for livestock drinking water on the farm/ranch and on the range.
4) Ensure that any modernization of the water act includes a water "AWR" - an Agricultural Water Reserve to go along with the ALR lands.

KindsOfCollaborativeProcesses: I would like to see a government committed to the agricultural industry on water and land policies.

AdequatelyEquipFutureGenerations: Government can start with educating the vast majority of people (urban and suburban people) on not wasting water on things like backyard pools - a public pool is good enough - or go to a lake.....it is things like this that waste water, or golf courses and manicured lawns etc.