

From: Vivian Sorensen
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To: Living Water Smart ENV:EX
Subject: RESPONSE TO BC MODERNIZATION OF WATER ACT - UNES

Water Modernization needs to address sovereignty, water quality and water rites for ecosystems and species.

BACKGROUND:

Recently I joined the Forum for Sockeye at the Wosk Centre, invited by SFU. I attended with the hope to represent interests of our community and to be a part of environmental solutions, specifically the recovery of sockeye on the west coast.

I am a citizen advocate and executive member of **Univercity Neighbours for Environmental Sustainability**, and member of **Stoney Creek Environmental Committee**.

I live at UniverCity, Burnaby Mountain, BC in a community of 3,000 residents.

The two day forum featured a powerful selection of scientists, ngo's, and key political policy makers. The science is thoughtful...powerful and collected around global warming, sea lice caused by fish farms, and topics as timely as sewage treatment in Vancouver with impact on migrating Sockeye in the Fraser River. Topics revolved around the sensitive and complex reaction on the salmon populations, in our streams and rivers as well as in the open ocean. Scientists, including those from our own mountain at SFU unveiled the folly of prediction on the delicate balance of rivers and oceans.

Prediction of our future salmon runs will, in part require us to reevaluate our basic cultural assumptions. Business as usual may not (and likely will not) be able to buy us the

protection and stewardship of our resources.

WATER POLICY – our greatest tool

I had come to the forum to learn how we can use water policy to help set standards for community up on Burnaby Mountain for ecological balance, as we continue to grow the UniverCity community, I did not know that we are currently reviewing our 100 year old water act in BC! The Modernization Act Revision deals with such glaring oversight as standards and rules for groundwater currently with NO standards, and relevant to the forum, the rights of Salmon to water habitat.

Yet The BC Modernization Act of is almost invisible in the public eye.

Groundwater, Sewage Treatment including methods to push for standards in Vancouver; water rights for Salmon, and water sovereignty. It is heady stuff.

We stall to enforce meaningful minimal standards by 2020 to our sewage treatment in Vancouver. (?!?) While we stall, salmon populations are poisoned as they migrate past the ineffective water treatments plants in our developed areas.

Water will only become more and more important in the years to come and now is the time to set standards that can protect our sovereignty, our right to healthy water and the very ecological balances.

As we review water licenses-within the Modernization Effort - a very important issue due to the growing interest in private hydro plants on BC rivers - the complexity around sovereignty is apparent.

There are currently 44,000 water licenses in BC, some without expiration...

Assuring water rights to salmon populations is an important and powerful tool to counter destructive activities on our local streams and rivers.

For example unregulated groundwater extraction. (The life cycle of salmon are impacted on many levels including access to cooling sources from groundwater esp. chinook) (Craig Orr on Water Law and Stream Health in BC). However; today there are no regulations to distance from streams and rivers for groundwater extraction.

WaterSmart emphasizes the roll of the individual citizen. We must grab our opportunity to effect POLICY! These tools TOGETHER are our best chance.

Our future depends on decisive action taken on the Modernization of Water Act. We need strong policy to help protect our water quality, stream health, and to provide viable habitat for our local salmon populations.

OUR MAIN ISSUES ARE:

1. Protect Stream Health
2. Legislated improved water governance including: government, NGO's, Industrial and shared water governance
3. Improve efficiency and ALLOCATION
4. Regulate Ground Water. 20% of BC Residents and 750,000 people use ground water!
5. Requirements for ecosystems and species
6. We need legally binding STANDARDS, not guidelines

For our future:

Water policy is one of our most valuable tools to protect environment on Burnaby Mountain – especially if it legally binding standards, not guidelines...It is a tool to protect against unsustainable development and to guide good growth. Burnaby Mountain watershed supports vibrant salmon and trout spawning populations. Our citizens of Univercity Neighbours for Environmental Sustainability are committed to creating positive action. Our area is a special opportunity and possible example of how water policy could impact and support life sustaining systems and how we could see results of our positive actions.

Vivian Sorensen

UniverCity Neighbours for Environmental Sustainability (UNES)
<http://groups.google.com/group/univercityneighbours>
twitter account: <http://twitter.com/greenschoolUNES>
604-299-3253