
From: Steve Brubacher [sbrubacher@urban-systems.com]
Sent: April-30-10 3:35 PM
To: Living Water Smart ENV:EX
Cc: Daisy Foster; Don Dobson
Subject: Water Act Modernization Comments
Attachments: 2010-04-30 USL WAM LoS.pdf

Attached please find our letter of endorsement for the BCWWA Recommendations provided under separate cover.

Steve Brubacher *P. Eng.*
principal



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April 30, 2010

File: 916.0019.00

Water Act Modernization
Innovation and Planning Team
PO BOX 9362 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC V8W 9M2

Attention: Lyn Kriwoken, Director, Innovation and Planning Team

RE: Modernizing the Water Act - Support for BCWWA Recommendations

Urban Systems Ltd. is a multi-disciplinary, full service consulting firm with offices throughout British Columbia and in Alberta. Our team of 300 + professionals combines their expertise in the principal areas of practice of water, transportation, and community planning, providing services to:

- governments and government agencies;
- first nations; and
- private land development and forestry companies.

This expertise is brought from backgrounds in planning, engineering, environmental science, and landscape architecture. We offer a broad range of complementary skills all of which involve water in one way or other both in the natural and urban built environments. Many of the projects that we undertake in BC are affected by the *Water Act* and therefore we are very interested in the initiative currently underway by the Province.

Many of our water professionals are members of the British Columbia Water and Waste Association (BCWWA) and have reviewed the response prepared by the BCWWA commenting on the issues presented in the Discussion Paper. We are very pleased to offer this letter of support for the BCWWA response. We encourage the province to provide the ministry with the necessary resources and support to move ahead with Phase 3 of the process that would result in the preparation of draft legislation by the Fall of 2010.

The effective management of the province's water resource is fundamental to every facet of the future of BC where modern, effective, and flexible water legislation is essential in this time of change. We believe that the Discussion Paper and Technical Background Report have raised the profile of the *Water Act* and the principles upon which the paper has been developed provide the context for open, public discussion for future water management in BC.

We would like to draw your attention specifically to the recommendation made by the BCWWA that we need a framework for determining the value of water. In our opinion this framework needs to integrate

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the individual values of all those that live, work and play within that ecosystem with the broader values that we as British Columbian's and Canadians share. It also needs a process by which these individual values can be translated into a set of ecosystem values with priority assigned to those values of greatest importance. Looking forward the prioritization of these values will become key as the potential uses for water will exceed the capacity of the watershed or aquifer (particularly in times of water scarcity). After the local community has been engaged in the establishment of the values associated with the water resource in its watershed, the outcomes will assist the Province in the management of water allocation based on appropriate knowledge of the local values. The priority of ecosystem water values will likely vary in different areas across the province. The current act provides very limited explicit direction in this regard although values may be considered implicitly. We believe that BC requires legislation that will permit improved flexibility in administering the resource that can adapt to changing conditions. Modernizing the *Water Act* should provide the foundation to allow us to respond to change.

Urban Systems understands the amount of work that lies ahead for the ministry to review and summarize the results of the public discussion process and to then to frame the draft legislation. As a committed group of water professionals we look forward to the opportunity to review the summary of the discussions and the proposed legislation.

We believe that now is the time to modernize our Water Act and we appreciate the opportunity provided by the Province to provide our perspective on this.

Sincerely,

URBAN SYSTEMS LTD.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steve Brubacher".

Steve Brubacher, P.Eng.
Water Practice Leader

/sb

cc. Daisy Foster – CEO BCWWA

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