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From: John Snyder [mailto:scalaska@shaw.ca]

Sent: Wednesday, November 13, 2013 2:03 PM

To: Living Water Smart ENV:EX

Subject: Water Sustainability Act

CoalWatch Comox Valley Society
PO Box 157
Union Bay, BC V0R 3B0

RE: Water Sustainability Act

First of all CoalWatch believes the health and well being of our communities is dependent on a clean drinking water supply. Having said that, CoalWatch submits the following comments on the Water Sustainability Act.

1. A thirty day comment period on the Water Sustainability Act is insufficient, and CoalWatch requests the comment period be extended until March 1, 2014.
2. The Public Trust Doctrine must be embedded within the legislation. The Public Trust Doctrine does not appear within said documents and this is an absolute necessity if the Water Act is going to be at all meaningful. Water, and access to water, belongs to the Commons. The people are the Commons; not industry and not corporations and not the economy! Water belongs to the people of this province and that must be clearly and distinctly recognized within the Water Act.
3. Environmental Flow needs and critical environmental flow must be embedded in Provincial Water Objectives which it currently is not. Without our environment, there would be no economy. There must be clear and legally enforceable environmental flow protections that apply across the province in watersheds where, in particular, EFN's are under threat.
4. CoalWatch also challenges your necessity to have Water rights and anything to do with Water enshrined in FOURTEEN Provincial Acts. Why is there not one Water Act with any and all water related issues imbedded within the one Act instead of having 14 Acts that affect our water? If the government is going to leave 14 Acts in place to deal with our water, then there are many other Acts that require revision to give 'WATER' the top priority it must have. In addition, and to be very clear, there should be a Ministry of Water where responsibility for this resource is under the control of one Ministry.
5. Exemptions must not be given to oil, gas and forestry and any other industry/corporation. This exemption, given to industry, is what is being enshrined within the Water Act and is unacceptable.
6. FITFIR must be removed! CoalWatch and it's affiliate groups have consistently enunciated this and government continues to not listen. Why?
7. Explicit provisions must be made that enable local watershed governance, whether it be on Crown Land or Private Land. Such a provision must take into

consideration first and foremost, Environmental Flow Needs (EFN'S). In addition, funds must be provided by the Provincial Government to make it possible for Local Governance Boards to operate. Along with this, there must be enforcement rights given to a Local Governance structure. Currently and under your proposal, the preciseness CoalWatch is seeking is entirely missing and currently the Provincial Government provides little if any enforcement of rules they may make. This must change if we are truly going to protect our water resources and the surrounding environs on which the sustainability of water relies. In nature all things are connected with water being no exception.

8. Groundwater! As a province, one of the very last in the country, the government has finally recognized that our groundwater (aquifers) must also be protected. However, the government is proposing to place groundwater under the FITFIR portion of an Act? Why would the government do this?

In addition, corporations, like Nestle and the oil and gas industry that insist on removing millions of liters of precious water from our underground are being given the right to do so with far too little cost attached, and with no consideration being given to EFN's! Our aquifers and above ground water interplay consistently in most areas of the province, with the government failing to recognize that fact either. This must be amended to have any meaning put to the government proposal.

9. Licensing? - Far too long of a period for license reviews! This should be done every 5-10 years not 30-40 years!

10. The Water Act must make clear that there is no co modification of water.

11. When will the government take the responsibility to determine the capacity of our water resources? Without that being done, we will continue down the slippery slope of corporate control and overuse of this resource, which is unacceptable.

12. Groundwater and surface water are connected and should be treated as one in this Act.

Regards,
John Snyder
President, CoalWatch Comox Valley Society