

From: Paul Grinder ***Personal Identifiers Removed***
Sent: Thursday, November 14, 2013 9:06 PM
To: Living Water Smart ENV:EX
Subject: The Proposed Water Sustainability Act for B.C.

November 15, 2013

Hon. Mary Polak

Minister of Environment Water Protection and Sustainability Branch

PO Box 9362, Stn Prov Govt

Victoria, B.C. V8W 9M2

The Oceanside Coalition for Strong Communities has had a long standing interest in the sustainability and governance of our local watershed. In 2006 we organized and presented a three day conference in Qualicum Beach entitled "Our Water, Our Future". Since then we have worked with other Oceanside groups to advance the cause of improved water stewardship through various presentations and forums.

The Coalition is very pleased that there is now a legislative proposal for a Water Sustainability Act for British Columbia; however, we do have several comments, concerns and suggestions.

1. Water is a Public Trust and as such must be codified in the proposed legislation. Current and future holders of water licences must be accountable to the water sustainability needs of the public as a whole.
2. Protecting the environmental flow must be embedded in the legislation as a priority to the functioning of a healthy watershed. Protecting our watershed is cheaper than trying to restore it after the damage has been done. These protective measures must be more than mere suggestions; they must be enforceable.
3. The legislation needs to require the provincial funding of regular monitoring and data collection on all the variables related to maintaining healthy watersheds.
4. A strategy needs to be developed so that communities can control either the whole, or at least the most essential parcels, of their watersheds.
5. Local communities must be involved in the governance and the enforcement of the protection of their watersheds and aquifers.

This proposed legislation is extremely important to the future of British Columbia. Unfortunately we only have been allowed one month to digest, discuss and respond. An extension would allow for a broader engagement with the community.

On behalf of the Oceanside Coalition for Strong Communities,

Paul Grinder

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