

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you that BC is getting a new Water Act! As a practicing ecologist, I appreciate the extraordinary amount of expertise, discussion and time it has taken to draft this piece of legislation. Groundwater is a vital and yet tragically under-valued resource. It needs to be regulated with the utmost care and foresight.

The Precautionary Principle

All living things require water to survive and thrive. In light of our drastically changing climate, increasing rates of groundwater use and subsequent contamination (primarily due to the agricultural industry and mining practices), it is paramount that all public and private water uses be carefully regulated. Despite what the current federal government is promoting, cumulative negative environmental impacts are a reality in everything we humans do. The Precautionary Principle therefore advises that due to the complexity of ecosystems (natural cycles and feedback loops), and human products and activities (e.g., new chemicals constantly being developed), we can never know with certainty the entire suite of effects our actions (or inactions) are having/will have on our environment and our health. Consequently, the decisions we make need to err on the side of caution since we ever only know 'part of the equation.'

Improving the Proposed Water Sustainability Act (WSA)

The following aspects of the proposed WSA need further improvement to ensure the new Water Sustainability Act does, in fact, address sustainability:

- "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and made mandatory in all new and existing licences if fish and other environmental values are to be conservatively protected. These "environmental flows" must be enforceable and must apply to ALL sectors of industry i.e., there should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas.
- Any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest, which includes environmental values. Charging fair market value to water bottling companies who currently make huge profits from our precious water resources is just one example. Disallowing water licences to be traded in markets is another.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is highly inadequate; reviews need to occur frequently. In addition, the new groundwater licences to be granted to existing users (primarily large industrial users), must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels (i.e., employing The Precautionary Principle) and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
- Water use fees must make public "cents." Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs for responsibly managing our water, and for ensuring resources are available for local watershed planning and management.

- More opportunities for public participation in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows need to be granted. BC also needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it correctly.
- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step; it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

I look forward to seeing a revised WSA introduced in Spring 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, resources and flexibility to address current and future uncertainties and thus be more sustainable in its scope.

Sincerely,

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Port Moody BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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The following are priority areas for improvement that need to be in a new Water Sustainability Act this coming spring:

- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values is too discretionary in the WSA Proposal! "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new and existing licences.
- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.
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An issue that is of primary importance to me is in respect to small local governments: namely Improvement Districts. Small water systems must comply with the same regulatory requirements as large systems. These systems are currently (and wrongfully) denied access to federal and provincial grants, and other resources. The Provincial Government of BC (our Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development) has a mandate to convert Improvement District services to Regional Districts and Municipalities, over time. However, many Municipalities and Regional Districts are not willing to take over these services, until their water systems are brought up to costly regulatory standards. For some communities, this means substantial capital projects (valued at 1 million or more). There have been no provisions made to help Improvement Districts access the same grants and resources available to municipal governments. This puts citizens in small communities at a great disadvantage!

Provisions need to be made in the new Act, which allow access to grants to Improvement Districts AND/OR allow regulatory exemptions/exceptions where matters of public safety are not an issue.

Our communities are watching, as greater burdens are placed on water purveyors with respect to conservation, environmental protection, etc. If the government expects communities to comply, it needs to provide help to small communities who have limited resources and small tax pools.

As well as access to grants, there are other areas that would help Improvement Districts:

1. Access to affordable insurance and lending (currently available to Municipalities and Regional Districts)
2. Bulk-buying resources for rural areas, similar to that of the Ministry of Citizen's Services Procurement and Supply.

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Van Anda BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Water Sustainability Act", "To whom it may concern,

I am writing to provide feedback and suggestions for the new Water Sustainability Act (WSA) being proposed for our province. I am very pleased to see our water management legislation being addressed, as it currently does not contain the tools and laws required to effectively manage our water resources, which is becoming increasingly important in the face of climate change, growing populations, and increased industrial development. In order to provide a prosperous future for all British Columbians, we must first protect the environment that sustains us. For this reason, environmental protection should be legally protected as a first priority. After that, public use of water must be protected first and foremost above private and corporate interests. Once scientifically established and legally protected environmental levels are protected, and public needs are met, conditional opportunities for private use can be entertained.

Given this essential list of priority use, there are several areas that need to be improved in the new Water Sustainability Act:

- * The WSA needs to explicitly make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and ecosystems a number one priority, followed by essential household needs. Industrial use must only be granted given the first two needs are met, and must be able to be suspended during times of water shortage to ensure "environmental flows" and household needs are met first.

- * There should be no exemptions for industrial users in any sector, including Forestry or Oil and Gas, as currently contemplated in the WSA proposal.

- * "Environmental flows" and water levels need to be scientifically defined and legally protected through explicit legislation, not guidelines or discretionary rulings. All public and private water use licences, both existing and new, must meet these levels at all times, and be suspended according to priority in times of water shortage.

- * Water resources need to be managed on a watershed to watershed basis, with any administrative zoning or boundaries defined by natural watershed boundaries. Each watershed's required "environmental flows" needs to be determined individually based on climatic conditions specific to that watershed.

- * The WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.

- * License reviews need to happen frequently to respond to rapidly changing climatic conditions; 30 year review intervals are far too long. There should be a maximum 10 year review period, with the option of more frequent reviews pending environmental conditions in any given year.

- * Water use fees for both groundwater and surface water must cover all government's costs associated with licensing and responsible management of water resources. This includes costs associated with administration and scientific monitoring and other costs. Fees should also be sufficient to ensure resources are available for local watershed planning and management enabled under the new Act. No industrial user should be permitted to extract water without paying an appropriate fee.

* There need to be more opportunities for the public and watershed stewardship groups to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows.

* Local governments and First Nations must be given tools to share governance of local water resources.

* Finally, there needs to be an independent provincial body to oversee water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right.

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Water is our most important resource so consider very carefully when producing this new water act. We could survive without oil but never without water.

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Water is our right as citizenry and our future as humans--corporate stewardship has been poor with natural resources virtually universally, so it needs to be a publicly-controlled treasure with public consultation for its use and distribution.

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- There need to be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows. BC also needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right.
- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

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Gillies Bay BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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LET ME MAKE IT VERY CLEAR - All withdrawal of ground water constitutes THEFT of the commons. ALL injection of surface water into underground formations represents meddling with the natural cycles of water, and the flow of clean water is the lifeblood of LIFE. ALL use of water by industry MUST require that the water be returned to the natural cycle in the exact same condition as it was found in - as to cleanliness and temperature. ALL other use is again, theft of the commons.

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Victoria BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the Government's proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). Since the current Act is about 100 years old it is very important to make sure that the new Act will respond fully to the new demographic, environmental and industrial realities which now exist and which will change into the future. Many good proposals have been made thus far in the new Act, however there are still many additions required to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century. Given the changes that are occurring due to global warming, this work is needed more urgently than ever.

I feel that the following areas need to be addressed in a new Water Sustainability Act.

- * The WSA needs to mandate that "Environmental flows" protect fish and other environmental values, and the term itself should be scientifically defined, and apply to new and existing licences.

- * Water fees need to be established that will cover all government administration and management costs Provincially and locally.

- * The public's right to water must take precedence over private rights, by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses.

- * The WSA should make explicitly clear that water licences CANNOT be traded in markets.

- * There is a need to establish expert, independent, and adequately resourced oversight of BC's water resource use and allocation.

- * There should be increased support for public participation in setting environmental flows and the granting of licenses. There should be the opportunity for shared governance with the local community.

- * Review of water licenses need to be much more frequent than the current 30 years. Licenses for large industrial operations should require more frequent monitoring.

- * Water issues on First Nation Lands should allow for government to government negotiations.

Thank You for providing this opportunity for me to comment. I look forward to a new Water Act that will respond to the needs of our Province and its people in the 21st Century.

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Nanaimo BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Therefore, the areas for improvement that need to be in a new Water Sustainability Act are:

- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values is too discretionary in the WSA Proposal! "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new and existing licences. And they must not be bendable or negotiable.
- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. Also, any language in the WSA must not allow licenses to be traded in the markets.
- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There must not be any exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.
- In a climate changing world that is unfolding before our eyes and will escalate rapidly in 5 years, 30 years between licence reviews is too long; reviews should happen more frequently, yearly or biyearly. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honorable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
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- A public governing committee needs to be part of the decision making process of the licenses and the ongoing management of the process. We also need to have expertise of ecosystem management that is independent of industry and government that will oversee the process. an agent for earth's rights.
- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly. The modern world has not gotten earth stewardship right yet, it is time to have a Charter of Rights for the environment.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight.

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Kamloops BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "This new WSA concerns me deeply and I have been voicing my concerns with all of my friends and networks. We are watching this issue closely and trust that our interests and the interests of the next seven generations will not only be taken into consideration but will be met. Please see below for how this can be achieved.

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An issue that is of primary importance to me is in respect to small local governments: namely Improvement Districts. Small water systems must comply with the same regulatory requirements as large systems. These systems are currently (and wrongfully) denied access to federal and provincial grants, and other resources. The Provincial Government of BC (our Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development) has a mandate to convert Improvement District services to Regional Districts and Municipalities, over time. However, many Municipalities and Regional Districts are not willing to take over these services, until their water systems are brought up to costly regulatory standards. For some communities, this means substantial capital projects (valued at 1 million or more). There have been no provisions made to help Improvement Districts access the same grants and resources available to municipal governments. This puts citizens in small communities at a great disadvantage!

Provisions need to be made in the new Act, which allow access to grants to Improvement Districts AND/OR allow regulatory exemptions/exceptions where matters of public safety are not an issue.

Our communities are watching, as greater burdens are placed on water purveyors with respect to conservation, environmental protection, etc. If the government expects communities to comply, it needs to provide help to small communities who have limited resources and small tax pools.

As well as access to grants, there are other areas that would help Improvement Districts:

1. Access to affordable insurance and lending (currently available to Municipalities and Regional Districts)
2. Bulk-buying resources for rural areas, similar to that of the Ministry of Citizen's Services Procurement and Supply.

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Caring for your water into the future.

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****Please allow access to grants for small communities who have limited resources and limited taxation.**

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I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements.

Please make water a resource owned by the nation and not corporations.

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"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "The new Water Sustainability Act has great potential. However, I have some strong concerns about the WSA proposed.

The system of allowing the earliest water license users to continue to draw their full allotment even in times of a water shortage doesn't make sense - all users should be proportionally cut back and aquatic habitat must be maintained.

We are fortunate to live in a province with abundant water resources but they must be carefully allocated - water needs to be managed in the public (citizen taxpayer) interests. I'm worried that new industrial developments (i.e. water bottling, oil and gas extraction) will schlurp up an unfair amount of water and then not be required to compensate financially for that unequal use. Applications for industrial water rights need to be advertised, just as development proposals for Crown Land are required to be advertised. This would allow an opportunity for citizens to voice their objections, ask questions and to have a say in the decision regarding the application.

I am an advocate of local watershed management - my own rural watershed is part of a Community Forest License and that has allowed water users to make wise logging decisions in order to protect the quality of our water. I'm heartened to read that the WSA may give more responsibility for watershed management to local groups.

It seems that protecting fish and their habitat may not be a high enough priority in the proposed WSA - fish have always lost in a competition with industry and it is the provincial government's responsibility to advocate for our aquatic ecosystems. I encourage you to be that advocate by strengthening aquatic protection in the WSA.

Thank you for considering my thoughts.

Sincerely,

Personal Identifiers Removed

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). BC desperately needs a new Water Act.

An issue that is of primary importance to me is in respect to small local governments: namely Improvement Districts. Small water systems must comply with the same regulatory requirements as large systems. These systems are currently (and wrongfully) denied access to federal and provincial grants, and other resources. The Provincial Government of BC (our Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development) has a mandate to convert Improvement District services to Regional Districts and Municipalities, over time. However, many Municipalities and Regional Districts are not willing to take over these services, until their water systems are brought up to costly regulatory standards. For some communities, this means substantial capital projects (valued at 1 million or more). There have been no provisions made to help Improvement Districts access the same grants and resources available to municipal governments. This puts citizens in small communities at a great disadvantage!

Provisions need to be made in the new Act, which allow access to grants to Improvement Districts AND/OR allow regulatory exemptions/exceptions where matters of public safety are not an issue.

Our communities are watching, as greater burdens are placed on water purveyors with respect to conservation, environmental protection, etc. If the government expects communities to comply, it needs to provide help to small communities who have limited resources and small tax pools.

As well as access to grants, there are other areas that would help Improvement Districts:

1. Access to affordable insurance and lending (currently available to Municipalities and Regional Districts)
2. Bulk-buying resources for rural areas, similar to that of the Ministry of Citizen's Services Procurement and Supply.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight.

Sincerely,

Personal Identifiers Removed

Van Anda BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). BC desperately needs a new Water Act, but we also need to make sure we get it right! There are lots of good things that are proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. BUT, there are a lot of things that need to be done better in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century.

The following are priority areas for improvement that need to be in a new Water Sustainability Act this coming spring:

- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values is too discretionary in the WSA Proposal! "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new and existing licences.
- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
- Water use fees must make public "cents". Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs for responsibly managing our water, and ensure resources are available for local watershed planning and management enabled under the new Act.
- There need to be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows. BC also needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right.
- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight.

Sincerely,

Personal Identifiers Removed

Victoria BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "I appreciate this opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). There are many good things that are proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. Yet, there are a number of areas of the proposed legislation that need to be addressed in a better way in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century and serve the needs of all British Columbians.

I believe that the following should be priority areas for improving the proposed Water Sustainability Act this coming spring:

- We need better protection of water flows for fish and other related wildlife and ecosystems. The current proposed provisions are too discretionary. "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be mandatory to meet minimum flow requirements in all new and existing licences. This is a major issue in the Cowichan and Koksilah Watershed where I live, putting spawning salmon populations at risk.
- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water must not harm the public interest. Environmental flows and essential household needs must be prioritized over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly prohibit the trading of water licences as commodities in markets.
- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must prioritize protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household uses, and these provisions must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal. The practices of these industries continue to be among the most significant threats to our watersheds.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is too long; reviews should happen more frequently, likely in the range of 10 years at the longest, with a commitment to support data collection and monitor to ensure the reviews are meaningful. As well, any new groundwater licences granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to whatever future reviews are necessary to determine if the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
- Water use fees must serve the public interest. Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs for responsibly managing our water, and ensure resources are available for local watershed planning and management enabled under the new Act. If watershed management is delegated to local government, water use fees and licensing fees should be payable to local government to provide appropriate resources to ensure good governance.
- A process for broad public participation in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows needs to be delineated, and that process needs to be designed to ensure that it cannot be high-jacked by special private interests. BC also needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and scientific expertise to do it right.

- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step. The process for local governance of watersheds must ensure local watershed boards have a clear mandate, the resources to support them in governing responsibly, and their responsibility to govern collaboratively with First Nations must be clearly delineated.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input.

Sincerely,

Personal Identifiers Removed

Cowichan Bay BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). BC desperately needs a new Water Act.

An issue that is of primary importance to me is in respect to small local governments: namely Improvement Districts. Small water systems must comply with the same regulatory requirements as larger systems. These systems are currently (and wrongfully) denied access to federal and provincial grants, and other resources. The Provincial Government of BC (our Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development) has a mandate to convert Improvement District services to Regional Districts and Municipalities, over time. However, many Municipalities and Regional Districts are not willing to take over small services until their water systems are brought up to costly regulatory standards. For some communities, this means substantial capital projects (valued at \$1 million or more). There have been no provisions made to help Improvement Districts access the same grants and resources available to municipal governments. This puts citizens in small communities at a great disadvantage!

Provisions need to be made in the new Act, which allow access to grants to Improvement Districts AND/OR allow regulatory exemptions/exceptions where matters of public safety are not an issue.

Our communities are watching, as greater burdens are placed on water purveyors with respect to conservation, environmental protection, etc. If the government expects communities to comply, it needs to provide help to small communities who have limited resources and limited taxation.

As well as access to grants, there are other resources that would help Improvement Districts:

1. Access to affordable insurance and lending (currently available to Municipalities and Regional Districts)
2. Bulk-buying resources for rural areas, similar to that of the Ministry of Citizen's Services Procurement and Supply.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight.

Sincerely,

Personal Identifiers Removed

Gillies Bay BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). BC desperately needs a new Water Act, but we also need to make sure we get it right! There are lots of good things that are proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. BUT, there are a lot of things that need to be done better in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century.

The following are priority areas for improvement that need to be in a new Water Sustainability Act this coming spring:

- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values is too discretionary in the WSA Proposal! "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new and existing licences.
- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
- Water use fees must make public "cents". Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs for responsibly managing our water, and ensure resources are available for local watershed planning and management enabled under the new Act.
- There need to be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows. BC also needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right.
- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight.

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Personal Identifiers Removed

Qualicum Beach BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
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- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight.

Sincerely,

Personal Identifiers Removed

Burnaby BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). BC desperately needs a new Water Act, but we also need to make sure we get it right! This is especially true given the way in which article 11 of the Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) permits water to be a commodity for exploitation by multinational corporations.

There are lots of good things that are proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. BUT, there are a lot of things that need to be done better in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century.

The following are priority areas for improvement that need to be in a new Water Sustainability Act this coming spring:

- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values is too discretionary in the WSA Proposal! "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new and existing licences.
- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
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- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight.

Sincerely,

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Nelson BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
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- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight.

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- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
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- There need to be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows. BC also needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right.
- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight.

Sincerely,

Personal Identifiers Removed Victoria BC

"Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for this opportunity to respond to the proposals for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA).

Although we need a new Water Act, we need carefully to consider our options, not least because this will likely be a rare opportunity. In this light there are 7 key areas that need to be addressed. These are:

1) There needs to be mandatory regulation relating to the protection of watersheds for ecosystem health and community use.

2) The WSA must make provision for the maintenance of an ecological reserve of water unavailable for any use other than conservation, the maintenance of fish habitat and preservation of a functioning ecosystem. Following the advice of other concerned groups, this must include:

- * Legally establish standards (not guidelines) for environmental flow needs and critical environmental flow protections;
- * Apply environmental flow needs to both new licenses and existing surface water licenses;
- * Commit to public consultation on the development of regulations and policy to create the framework for environmental flow needs; and
- * Explicitly state that decision makers may suspend or refuse to issue a licence if it would negatively affect an aquatic ecosystem.

3) Private rights should not transcend the public's interest in water resources. The "first in time, first in right" system must be discontinued.

4) Commercial use of water should be charged at a commercial rather than a nominal rate. This should be determined by a regulatory body, the costs of which would be carried by revenue raised through industrial water extraction licences. As with all resources, water should be seen as a source of income for the Province, but one secondary to environmental and public interests. There should be no further unrestricted use.

5) Administration of the new Act should include public, community input.

6) Regulation and monitoring of industrial activities that although not drawing directly on water supplies, do impact water quality and availability. For example, clear-cut logging.

7) Given that we are on the threshold of climate warming, the impact of the new water Act may shift over time. There should therefore be a regular review of outcomes and a mechanism put in place that will enable change and revision to the conditions of the Act such that the above priorities continue to be prioritised.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these provisions and provides the means and flexibility to face current and future uncertainties for watersheds, rivers and lakes, and the security of community supply and ecosystem health.

Yours sincerely,

Personal Identifiers Removed

Shirley

BC

Personal Identifiers Removed

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for your work to revise the water act and work for the public interest to ensure safe, clean, ready supplies of water for centuries to come. Thanks also for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). I am a planner and believe strongly in water issues and managing them for the public benefit.

I believe BC desperately needs a new Water Act, but we also need to make sure we get it right! There are lots of good things that are proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. In addition there some other changes that I believe need to be made in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century and ensure the supply for generations.

Some additional things that I think need to be in a new Water Sustainability Act this coming spring are:

- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. I really believe strongly in this. There can be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values is too discretionary in the WSA Proposal. "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new and existing licences.
- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
- Water use fees must make public "cents". Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs for responsibly managing our water, and ensure resources are available for local watershed planning and management enabled under the new Act.
- There need to be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows. BC also needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right.

- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight. Water is necessary for life. Thank you for working towards ensuring it is safe and accessible for the local residents of BC.

Sincerely,

Personal Identifiers Removed

Port Alberni BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). BC desperately needs a new Water Act, but we also need to make sure we get it right! There are lots of good things that are proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. BUT, there are a lot of things that need to be done better in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century.

The following are priority areas for improvement that need to be in a new Water Sustainability Act this coming spring:

- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values is too discretionary in the WSA Proposal! "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new and existing licences.
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Salmon Arm BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Victoria BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "I usually try to word comments regarding policies or government actions that can affect me as a citizen of BC and as an individual who does take out democratic society for granted. This is one time when the wording supplied by someone else so closely mirrors my own concerns that I feel little need to paraphrase. Please take the following concerns to heart. I see no need to rush legislation through that may not be in the best interest of all involved. I particularly want to ensure that potential polluters not in any circumstances be allowed to be exempt from any policies that will protect our precious supply of water.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). BC desperately needs a new Water Act, but we also need to make sure we get it right! There are lots of good things that are proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. BUT, there are a lot of things that need to be done better in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century.

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Dear people,

I agree with the above points and would like to add:

I would like to STRESS how wrong I think it is to allow free rein for industry to use precious water for the extraction of LNG. There needs to be scrutiny around this "fracking" process, in fact it needs to be stopped altogether until it can be proven that using such a precious resource for this purpose makes any sense at all. How can this be completely safe?

We must protect water quality at all costs - without clean water everything dies.

What a huge responsibility. I pray that you can live up to it.

Sincerely,

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NELSON, B C. ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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- Water use fees must make public "cents". The public should never be asked to subsidize industrial water use. Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs, and only government's costs, for responsibly managing our water, and to ensure resources are available for local watershed planning and management enabled under the new Act.
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"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Letter:
Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). BC desperately needs a new Water Act.

An issue that is of primary importance to me is in respect to small local governments: namely Improvement Districts. Small water systems must comply with the same regulatory requirements as larger systems. These systems are currently (and wrongfully) denied access to federal and provincial grants, and other resources. The Provincial Government of BC (our Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development) has a mandate to convert Improvement District services to Regional Districts and Municipalities, over time. However, many Municipalities and Regional Districts are not willing to take over small services until their water systems are brought up to costly regulatory standards. For some communities, this means substantial capital projects (valued at \$1 million or more). There have been no provisions made to help Improvement Districts access the same grants and resources available to municipal governments. This puts citizens in small communities at a great disadvantage!

Provisions need to be made in the new Act, which allow access to grants to Improvement Districts AND/OR allow regulatory exemptions/exceptions where matters of public safety are not an issue.

Our communities are watching, as greater burdens are placed on water purveyors with respect to conservation, environmental protection, etc. If the government expects communities to comply, it needs to provide help to small communities who have limited resources and limited taxation.

As well as access to grants, there are other resources that would help Improvement Districts:

1. Access to affordable insurance and lending (currently available to Municipalities and Regional Districts)
2. Bulk-buying resources for rural areas, similar to that of the Ministry of Citizen's Services Procurement and Supply.

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The following are priority areas for improvement that need to be in a new Water Sustainability Act this coming spring:

- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values is too discretionary in the WSA Proposal! "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new and existing licences.
- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There can be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal as this completely negates the effectiveness of the Act.
- In a climate changing world, with dwindling water availability 30 years between licence reviews is far too long as we don't know at this time what the future will look like so reviews should be possible every few years as needed to ensure safety of the supplies. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to regular and frequent reviews to ensure the withdrawals are at sustainable levels. These must at all times allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
- Water use fees must make public "cents". Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs for responsibly managing our water to a level required by all affected communities, and ensure resources are available for local watershed planning and management enabled under the new Act.
- There need to be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows. It is vital that BC has independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right.
- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the

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An issue that is of primary importance to me is in respect to small local governments: namely Improvement Districts. Small water systems must comply with the same regulatory requirements as large systems. These systems are currently (and wrongfully) denied access to federal and provincial grants, and other resources. The Provincial Government of BC (our Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development) has a mandate to convert Improvement District services to Regional Districts and Municipalities, over time. However, many Municipalities and Regional Districts are not willing to take over these services, until their water systems are brought up to costly regulatory standards. For some communities, this means substantial capital projects (valued at 1 million or more). There have been no provisions made to help Improvement Districts access the same grants and resources available to municipal governments. This puts citizens in small communities at a great disadvantage!

Provisions need to be made in the new Act, which allow access to grants to Improvement Districts AND/OR allow regulatory exemptions/exceptions where matters of public safety are not an issue.

Our communities are watching, as greater burdens are placed on water purveyors with respect to conservation, environmental protection, etc. If the government expects communities to comply, it needs to provide help to small communities who have limited resources and small tax pools.

As well as access to grants, there are other areas that would help Improvement Districts:

1. Access to affordable insurance and lending (currently available to Municipalities and Regional Districts)
2. Bulk-buying resources for rural areas, similar to that of the Ministry of Citizen's Services Procurement and Supply.

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Am particularly interested in watershed protection after seeing the destruction of the South Fraser Watershed that has been a result of construction of the South Fraser Freeway.

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An issue that is of primary importance to me is in respect to small local governments: namely Improvement Districts. Small water systems must comply with the same regulatory requirements as large systems. These systems are currently (and wrongfully) denied access to federal and provincial grants, and other resources. The Provincial Government of BC (our Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development) has a mandate to convert Improvement District services to Regional Districts and Municipalities, over time. However, many Municipalities and Regional Districts are not willing to take over these services, until their water systems are brought up to costly regulatory standards. For some communities, this means substantial capital projects (valued at 1 million or more). There have been no provisions made to help Improvement Districts access the same grants and resources available to municipal governments. This puts citizens in small communities at a great disadvantage!

Provisions need to be made in the new Act, which allow access to grants to Improvement Districts AND/OR allow regulatory exemptions/exceptions where matters of public safety are not an issue.

Our communities are watching, as greater burdens are placed on water purveyors with respect to conservation, environmental protection, etc. If the government expects communities to comply, it needs to provide help to small communities who have limited resources and small tax pools.

As well as access to grants, there are other areas that would help Improvement Districts:

1. Access to affordable insurance and lending (currently available to Municipalities and Regional Districts)
2. Bulk-buying resources for rural areas, similar to that of the Ministry of Citizen's Services Procurement and Supply.

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"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "I write this on November 15, having been only recently made aware of the very short time limit to comment on the proposed new Water Sustainability Act.

I regard it as absolutely imperative that the deadline for comments about the proposal be extended six months.

That said, I appreciate the opportunity to make some points for your consideration.

I believe that BC desperately needs a new Water Act, but we also need to make sure we get it right! There are lots of good things that are proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. BUT, there are a lot of things that need to be done better in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century.

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- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
- Water use fees must make public "cents". Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs for responsibly managing our water, and ensure resources are available for local watershed planning and management enabled under the new Act.
- There need to be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows. BC also needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right.
- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight.

I wish to state very clearly that I agree very strongly with the points raised in the paragraphs above as I have lived in this community for over 40 years and understand just how serious are the problems created by the

current legislation. New and updated law is urgently needed and the comments above indicate the current proposed changes are grossly inadequate.

Sincerely,

Personal Identifiers Removed

Gillies Bay BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). BC desperately needs a new Water Act, but we also need to make sure we get it right! There are lots of good things that are proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. BUT, there are a lot of things that need to be done better in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century.

The following are priority areas for improvement that need to be in a new Water Sustainability Act this coming spring:

- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values is too discretionary in the WSA Proposal! "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new and existing licences.
- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
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- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
- Water use fees must make public "cents". Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs for responsibly managing our water, and ensure resources are available for local watershed planning and management enabled under the new Act.
- There need to be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows. BC also needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right.
- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight.

Sincerely,

Personal Identifiers Removed

Vancouver BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). It is time for this review and new processes to be put in place. Handing over a precious resource to a few industry to destroy it is not good management.

BC desperately needs a new Water Act, but we also need to make sure we get it right! There are lots of good things that are proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds.

The following are priority areas for improvement that need to be in a new Water Sustainability Act this coming spring:

- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values is too discretionary in the WSA Proposal! "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new and existing licences.
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- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen every 5 years but with a reasonable process. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
- Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs for responsibly managing our water, and ensure resources are available for local watershed planning and management enabled under the new Act.
- BC needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right.
- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014. Our water is a renewable resource but must be managed to benefit the environment, all animals life and for human use for industry. It is a delicate balance and the law must be enforced when someone or industry is abusing the system.

Sincerely,

Personal Identifiers Removed Victoria BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). BC desperately needs a new Water Act, but we also need to make sure the act ensures the best priorities. It is essential to make the environmental issues of first concern, along with ensuring water for households and our wildlife. It would be a terrible mistake to allow industry to be essentially unregulated with respect to its water usage - what insanity! Water is not an infinite resource; it can be mismanaged. Allowing free use of water for such activities as fracking should be illegal; the manner in which industry uses clean water for this activity, which then renders the water a net loss to our planet and our ecosystem, is extremely unwise and lacking in foresight.

Please, make the WSA a better act, not one which will damage the future availability of fresh water.

Sincerely,

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Austin, TX ON ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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vananda BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight.

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Cobourg ON ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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The following are priority areas for improvement that need to be in a new Water Sustainability Act this coming spring:

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- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
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- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight.

Sincerely,

Personal Identifiers Removed

Kamloops, B.C. ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA).

The following are priority areas for improvement that need to be in a new Water Sustainability Act this coming spring:

- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values is too discretionary in the WSA Proposal! "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new and existing licences.
- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
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Victoria BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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The following are priority areas for improvement that need to be in a new Water Sustainability Act by the spring of 2014:

- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values is too discretionary in the WSA Proposal! "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new and existing licences.
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- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal. Restoration of water potability must be assured by those who use water in such commercial operations.
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- User fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs for responsibly managing our water, and ensure resources are available for local watershed planning and management enabled under the new Act.
- There must be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows. The BC government must also retain oversight of water and watershed management and have the resources and expertise to do it right.
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We look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in 2014 that includes these improvements.

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Alert Bay BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
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Gillies Bay BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). BC desperately needs a new Water Act, but we also need to make sure we get it right! There are many good things that are proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. BUT, there are also many things that need to be included and enhanced in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century. Water and fresh water systems and sources will very soon be the most valuable resource and commodity we have, and the importance of getting this new ACT right, to be all inclusive cannot be overstressed.

The following are priority areas for improvement which should be required in the new Water Sustainability Act this spring:

- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values is too discretionary in the WSA Proposal! "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new AND existing older licences to take immediate effect.
- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature, people, farmers and food/agricultural growth & for essential household needs a top priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. Any industry which needs to use 'fresh water' sources to extract or produce their "product" must be charged, as an additional cost of their business, and that use should come 2nd place to the priority user rights above (for people/agriculture/fish habitats). They should be encouraged to use storm/sewer water runoff for their industry purposes. They can truck in untreated water for their industrial use as a tool & cost to their business, and any environmental clean up costs on their part of disturbance of watersheds or water, must be borne by them 100% and so written in to their (present & future) licencing agreements. There should absolutely be NO exemptions for forestry, oil/gas/mining/LNG water uses, as contemplated in the proposal, and many British Columbians feel strongly about this.
- In a climate changing world where water is quickly becoming our most valuable resource, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews must happen more frequently for effectiveness. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations. The impact of groundwater use, is huge and dirty used water, must not be pumped back into the ground, contaminating it, along with soil, by any industry.
- Water use fees must make public sense. Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs for

responsibly managing our water, and ensure resources are available for local watershed planning and management enabled under the new Act.

- There needs to be more opportunity for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and 'monitoring' of environmental flows and impacts. BC also needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right.
- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and puts people and environment 1st (over industry water use)...an ACT that has the tools, the resources and the flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight, for this extremely valuable resource - our water. There must be an immediate end to companies like Nestle, or oil, gas, mining and lumber industries using fresh or groundwater...for their profit or gains. I would appreciate a reply that my response was received by the deadline.

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Vancouver ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Valemount BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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My major concern now is this attempt to move ALR land protection and hearing the Minister of Agriculture tout this as a feasible plan. The last thing we need if we are to protect our Province's water is to have lands which are protected and set aside for agriculture to be put under the control of the gas/oil corporations. Please do NOT allow this to happen!!!!

There are lots of good things that are proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. BUT, there are a lot of things that need to be done better in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century.

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Please place priority consideration on REJECTING the exemption for forestry, oil, and gas. Industry should NOT be exempt from following governmental water use policies enacted with this proposed act. Their access to BC's resources is a PRIVILEGE, just as it is for citizens; that they generate revenue for the government is not enough reason for them to ignore the environmental impact on our precious water supply.

The policies we set today will be felt for generations of future BC residents. Please make the right decisions here and do not yield to industry lobbyists and pleading for special exempt status!

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Victoria BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). My comment is directly related to the application of the word 'sustainability in this new Act.

Fresh surface water is self-evidently scarce on the southern gulf islands (SGI). The Province holds these islands in trust 'to preserve and protect the trust area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of residents of the trust area and of the province generally, in cooperation with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, other persons and organizations and the Government of British Columbia'. The Islands Trust notes that 'this remarkable area is home to an exceptional variety of species of birds, fish, intertidal life, wildlife and plants'.

A Ministry of Environment study (by Matt Austin et al) has assessed the average importance of conservation of biodiversity, hectare for hectare, as higher in the SGI ecosection than in any other in BC except for Race Rocks. Clearly, an important element in conserving the biodiversity on these islands is the storage in perpetuity of the already scarce stored fresh water and associated wetlands that support the life forms that comprise the biodiversity.

On North Pender Island, there are only four substantial sources of stored surface fresh water, Roe lake, Magic lake, Buck Lake, and Gardom Pond. Gardom Pond is about 0.8 of a hectare in size, and the ecosystem comprised by this small lake and its adjacent wetlands supports a plethora of life forms, protected by a designated riparian zone and listed in the documentation for an already extant NAPTEP conservation covenant.

For all of the above reasons it is clearly in the public interest, and consistent with the purport of the new Water Sustainability Act, to ensure the continuing safe storage of the water in Gardom Pond. Yet, this water is stored behind what has only recently been categorized by the Province as a 'high consequence' dam. The current and ongoing costs of ensuring the safety of this dam under the new regulations, are far, far beyond the financial means of the four private lot owners who have been 'saddled' with the bulk of the associated costs by having been retroactively required to take out water licences (in 1994) to cover a large liability that was not identified when we bought our lots as part of a subdivision approved by the provincial Ministry of Transportation and Highways in 1991, 22 years ago.

After many years of our attempting to draw attention to the unworkability of expecting a few private citizens to take on the associated unmanageable maintenance and liability costs of providing for the public safety of the dam, we have at last been able to engage the CRD to assist us in dealing with finding a solution. However, at present the CRD must work on a cost-recovery basis. We have already contributed our share of the over \$20,000 dam safety review. A further \$40,000 of engineering studies have already been done, and we currently face additional identified engineering costs of over a million dollars. Or, we are advised, we could/should decommission the dam and 'drain the lake'. This

would contravene any principle of conserving biodiversity, and would also do away with the only locally stored water for fire fighting and for recharging the aquifer (through fractured sandstone as documented in a local PhD field study).

Currently there is no guarantee that we will not have to try to pay these impossibly high costs (three of the 6 water licences are held by pensioners), or drain the pond (also costly), or be fined and/or go to jail.

Unless the provincial government takes some regulatory action, its current policy of attempting to compel private citizens to take on costs and liabilities of a magnitude that it is either unwilling, or considers itself unable, to take on, on the public's behalf, will unfortunately remain unworkable.

The enactment of the WSA seems to us to be an admirably suited occasion to recognize the need for, and to help in providing for the sustainability of, a truly workable means of ensuring the safe storage of water, particularly for the purposes identified as necessary in the SGI ecosection of the province.

I thank you for this opportunity to comment, and I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes a remedy to ensure that this aspect of water sustainability is recognized and provided for through policy that is based on recognition and reflection of a workable provincial-- rather than an unworkable, private-- responsibility.

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Our specific experience is in the streamkeeping field where we have seen many surface water problems caused in part by lack of meaningful legislation.

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Surrey BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Of utmost concern is the lack of funding available to small Improvement Districts within the Province. Although mandated to comply with existing

standards, they are excluded from funding to help attain/maintain these standards

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Vancouver BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Funding for small water systems run by improvement districts should be included in this act. Small water systems must comply with the same regulatory requirements as larger systems, but are not funded. Small communities run by Improvement Districts are currently denied access to federal and provincial grants. The Provincial Government has made its own mandate to convert Improvement District services to Regional Districts and Municipalities, over time. However, many Municipalities and Regional Districts are not willing to take over small services until their water systems are brought up to regulatory standards. For some communities, this means substantial capital projects (valued at over \$1 million) for only 300 households. There are no provisions made to help Improvement Districts access the same grants and resources available to municipal governments. This puts citizens in small communities at a great disadvantage.

If the government expects small communities to comply with new regulations it needs to provide help to small communities who have limited resources and limited taxation.

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Sidney BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "This is to speak to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). We need a new Water Act in BC, as the original (very outdated) one is virtually worthless. There are lots of good things that are proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. BUT, there are a lot of things that need to be done better in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century.

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North Saanich BC

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"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "An important issue that needs addressing is funding for small water systems run by improvement districts. Small water systems must comply with the same regulatory requirements as larger systems.

These small communities run by Improvement Districts are currently denied access to federal and provincial grants. The Provincial Government has made its own mandate to convert Improvement District services to Regional Districts and Municipalities, over time. However, many Municipalities and Regional Districts are not willing to take over small services until their water systems are brought up to regulatory standards. For some communities, this means substantial capital projects (valued at over \$1 million) for only 300 households.

There have been no provisions made to help Improvement Districts access the same grants and resources available to municipal governments. This puts citizens in small communities at a great disadvantage.

If the government expects small communities to comply with new regulations it needs to provide help to small communities who have limited resources and limited taxation.

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Gillies Bay ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently, such as once every five to ten years. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
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Vancouver BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Please accept the following concerns, critiques, and recommendations below in forming the new Water Sustainability Act (WSA), which I wholeheartedly agree with:

- Groundwater must be legally protected from contamination by hydraulic fracturing and other industrial activities. It is impossible to clean up an aquifer once contaminated, and these underground stores of water will be absolutely essential to our health and food supply into the 21st century as we realise we cannot rely on predictable seasonal flows of surface water.
- More broadly speaking, the WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new and existing licences. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.
- As climate change continues to accelerate and cause ever more unpredictable weather, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently (every 5 - 10 years is probably reasonable). As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
- The current system of "first in time" water allocation is extremely outdated and dangerous. This must be scrapped and a system of water use prioritization implemented, taking sustainable ecological and local community needs into account first.
- Water use fees must make public "cents". Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs for responsibly managing our water, and ensure resources are available for local watershed planning and management enabled under the new Act.
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- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly. Equally important, communities should be required to demonstrate efforts to use water efficiently,

through a variety of legislative tools, initiatives, and incentives tailored to their region.

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Victoria BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "I appreciate the chance to reply to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). No question that BC needs a new Water Act. The issue is to get it right! There are lots of good things that are proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. BUT, there are a lot of things that need to be done better in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century.

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Gabriola Island BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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An issue that is of primary importance to me is in respect to small local governments: namely Improvement Districts. Small water systems must comply with the same regulatory requirements as larger systems. These systems are currently (and wrongfully) denied access to federal and provincial grants, and other resources. The Provincial Government of BC (our Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development) has a mandate to convert Improvement District services to Regional Districts and Municipalities, over time. However, many Municipalities and Regional Districts are not willing to take over small services until their water systems are brought up to costly regulatory standards. For some communities, this means substantial capital projects (valued at \$1 million or more). There have been no provisions made to help Improvement Districts access the same grants and resources available to municipal governments. This puts citizens in small communities at a great disadvantage!

Provisions need to be made in the new Act, which allow access to grants to Improvement Districts AND/OR allow regulatory exemptions/exceptions where matters of public safety are not an issue.

Our communities are watching, as greater burdens are placed on water purveyors with respect to conservation, environmental protection, etc. If the government expects communities to comply, it needs to provide help to small communities who have limited resources and limited taxation.

As well as access to grants, there are other resources that would help Improvement Districts:

1. Access to affordable insurance and lending (currently available to Municipalities and Regional Districts)
2. Bulk-buying resources for rural areas, similar to that of the Ministry of Citizen's Services Procurement and Supply.

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Finally our water acts should view protection of our waters as an unbreakable trust. We have to ensure that our generation and all succeeding ones have unfettered access to adequate supplies of clean, health, and life-giving water!

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There is a great deal of good advice coming to you, so I won't submit another boilerplate letter, echoing those suggestions.

An issue that is of primary importance to me is in respect to small local governments: namely Improvement Districts. Small water systems must comply with the same regulatory requirements as large systems. These systems are currently (and wrongfully) denied access to federal and provincial grants, and other resources. The Provincial Government of BC (our Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development) has a mandate to convert Improvement District services to Regional Districts and Municipalities, over time. However, many Municipalities and Regional Districts are not willing to take over these services, until their water systems are brought up to costly regulatory standards. For some communities, this means substantial capital projects (valued at 1 million or more). This is a catch 22 for many regions in BC! There have been no provisions made to help Improvement Districts access the same grants and resources available to municipal governments. This puts citizens in small communities at great risk and disadvantage!

Provision need to be made, in the new Act, to allow access to grants, by Improvement Districts AND/OR allow regulatory exemptions/exceptions where matters of public safety are not an issue.

Our communities are watching, as greater burdens are placed on water purveyors with respect to conservation, environmental protection, etc. If the government expects communities to comply, it needs to provide help to small communities who have limited resources and small taxation areas.

As well as access to grants, there are other areas that would help Improvement Districts:

1. Access to affordable Insurance and Lending (currently available to Municipalities and Regional Districts)
2. Bulk-buying resources for rural areas, similar to that of the Ministry of Citizen's Services Procurement and Supply.

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North Vancouver BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA).

I have the following concerns and comments:

1. The public should have more time - the deadline for the comment period should be extended until March 1st.
2. Protection of source water should be enshrined in the act and the Water act should take precedence over all other land uses and related acts (Forestry and mining acts etc.)
3. Local communities must have local control to protect and manage their community drinking water supplies.
4. Ground water and surface water are interconnected and should be treated as one in the act.
5. Environmental Flow Needs (EFN's) must be included in the Provincial Water Objectives
6. First in Time First in Right (FITFIR) must be removed and a modern water rights model adopted.
7. Exemptions from the act. must not be given to industrial sectors including the oil, gas, mining and forest industries.
8. Water is a human right and the Public Trust Doctrine should be embedded with the legislation.
9. License review periods should be shorter - every 5 to 10 years.

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Salt Spring Island BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA).

For a short time, I was on the environmental council in Campbell River. During that time, we became aware that sulphites were being leached into Long Lake, a source of our drinking supply from the Quinsam coal mine. There is a government department that is supposed to check when rules are broken, but whoever was in charge was not doing their job. Concerned, I wrote to our MLA, a Conservative at the time, who gave me lip service. He suggested I visit the mine and get a tour. Big help! Since I didn't have the stomach to fight bureaucracy and still sleep at night, I resigned.

Until governments take proactive stances when it comes to our natural resource of water and ensure that it's purity is protected at all costs, we will continue to slide down a slippery slope.

The growth of our economy is important but at what cost? Please protect our right to clean water. Make sure that industry is mindful of their responsibilities if they want to continue practicing in the mining, forestry and fishing sectors. You know what needs to be done. Thank you.

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BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "I am extremely worried about the future of our water supply, and our ability to sustain it during the climate change that is predicted for the foreseeable future. Our forests are under threat from the diseases, insects, and dryness from climate change; our animals are losing their environment and the necessities of life; our agriculture is losing the ability to be productive due to water shortages; and the drinking water in many places is no longer useable due to pollution or overuse by industry.

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Water is our most precious resource. Our life, and the lives of our children, grandchildren, and the generations to come depend on it. It must be protected as a public right.

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Williams Lake BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Port Hardy BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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plattsburg BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Victoria BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Delta BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "I agree with all that is said below, as well as, I do not think it is right that the Nestle food company can take water for free and bottle it for profit. Yes, they employ 200 ppl in Hope however the river is not theirs to take and should be a fee per year, per tonne, anything!

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New Westminster BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "This is more than a form letter from one. Many, many citizens of British Columbia want these proposals included in the new Water Sustainability Act. Your actions will show who you represent.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). You have obviously had corporate input to the new Water Act proposal. BC desperately needs a new Water Act, but we also need to make sure we get it right! Getting it right means NO special treatment for corporate entities.

There are lots of good things that are proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. BUT, there are a lot of things that need to be done better in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century.

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There are lots of good things that are proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. BUT, there are a lot of things that need to be done better in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century.

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- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets. THIS IS VITAL. WATER IS OUR MOST VITAL RESOURCE. IT MUST BE MAINTAINED IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST. IT MUST NEVER BE ALLOWED TO BE USED BY PRIVATE LICENSEES AS A COMMODITY THAT CAN BE TRADED IN MARKETS.

- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal. PLEASE, PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW EXEMPTIONS FOR FOREST AND IN PARTICULAR GAS AND OIL COMPANIES. THESE COMPANIES HAVE HUGE FINANCIAL RESOURCES THAT CAN ALLOW THEM TO PUSH THROUGH PLANS THAT ARE OFTEN NOT IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE PUBLIC OR THE ENVIRONMENT. PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT ALL PROVINCIAL WATER OBJECTIVES ARE ENTIRELY ENFORCEABLE. In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations. AGAIN THE WORLD CLIMATE IS CHANGING TOO FAST . 30 YEARS IS TOO LONG. IN PARTICULAR, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT EXISTING LICENSEES NOT BE ALLOWED TO BE "GRANDFATHERED" IN. THEY MUST BE MADE TO FOLLOW ANY NEW RULES THAT WOULD NOW APPLY

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INDEPENDANT OVERSIGHT IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT. IT MUST BE SEEN TO BE OPEN AS WELL AS INDEPENDANT.

- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THIS ACT HAS RESOURCES LEGISLATED IN SO THAT AS GOVERNMENTS CHANGE THE ACT REMAINS THE SAME.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight.

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I do not support industry siphoning off fresh water sources for their exclusive profits in activities such as fracking and mining!

There needs to be user regulations for the amount of water allowed to be taken and necessary fees to make industry pay attention to the value of what they seem to think is free for their taking!~

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Duncan BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Living on an island where fresh water is scarce, or even unobtainable, has sensitised me to the need for very careful stewardship of all of BC's water.

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West Chicago BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Although I seldom include bulk letters in my comments to government bodies, this bulk letter carries some decent suggestions, in my view. As such, I have altered my concerns within this bulk letter to make it more personal and more expressive of my and others views.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). BC desperately needs a new Water Act, but we also need to make sure we get it right! There are lots of good things that are proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. BUT, there are a lot of things that need to be done better in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century.

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- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values is too discretionary in the WSA Proposal! "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new and existing licences. Also, and in this section, the definition of waterways should include by definition, what is classed as "Wet Lands" for the purpose of this proposed legislation.

- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.

Agreed 100% but as I state below, any licences should include the need for municipalities to adhere to costing for other industrial users.

- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal. To this end, municipalities should not be exempt in any manner as well.

- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations. I disagree with the inclusion of First Nations in this statement as they are just another user group. A very public group but just another user group and as such, should not be included in any legislation wording.

- Water use fees must make public "cents". Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover MORE THAN government's costs for responsibly managing our water, and ensure resources are available for local watershed planning and management enabled under the new Act. The

ACT should impose adequate monetary obligations on users of all levels, such that the costs encourage conservation of use of our waters.

- I disagree with this statement as we hire politicians and they hire experts to deal with this topic. To have micro management by the public negates the need for politicians and for expert technicians. I TOTALLY DISAGREE with this statement. There need to be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows. BC also needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right.

- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly BUT ONLY IN AN ADVISORY MANNER NOT DECISION MAKING MANNER.

OTHER ITEMS not mentioned in this bulk letter, is that I would like to see that current users, INCLUDING municipalities which access both ground and surface water, should have industrial costs associated with that extraction. In other words, a large wholesale dollar amount should be imposed on all industrial users, not a paltry and token amount as discussed vis a vis the water extraction plant in the Hope area. I believe we cannot charge the large industrials, retail levels, but we must make the wholesale use of OUR water from what ever source a challenge so that credible means of conservation of water in its simple USE, is challenged.

With Respect

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BC

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Radium HOT Springs BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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"WSA ", "

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I'm asking for groundwater licensing to be held at the threshold in the range of 20-40 cubic meters per day range.

I'm also asking for standards not guidelines for determining and maintaining instream flows.

I want better mechanisms for watershed plans and clear and seed-funded mechanisms for developing local watershed sustainability plans.

I also want provincial water objectives to be quantitative and enforced providing mandatory minimums for the province in water protection.

This is a big deal, I hope you listen to what the people want. We need to think long-term so everyone benefits from our decisions today. Please think with people and planet in mind and not just industry and economics for today.

Thanks for listening.

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"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "I appreciate the opportunity to send my opinions regarding a new water act.

My most important input would be to encourage the BC legislature to restore any of the many protections to BC waterways that have been removed by Ottawa in their disastrous redesign of of the Fisheries act and the Navigable water act, that are constitutional to replace.

Of course we need more protection for all of our waterways, but as I believe that clean fresh water is a human right, I do not believe that we should be charging for it, except perhaps in thise areas where a corporation is reselling it, as in bottled fresh water. This would not include municipalities, as they do not have a profit motive in distributing fresh water.

While I recognize that the offshore waters are outside of BC's jurisdiction, I wonder if the inshore salt waters in our complex fjords, and especially our estuaries, need more certain protection than they have today.

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It is so heartwarming to see renowned people like the Pope supporting the end of Fracking. Fracking is Ecocide. Wasting water, causing pollution and many other environmental implications. If we can unite all cases of mass environmental destruction calling them Ecocide and define them as a crime, we will be much more powerful in protecting our planet.

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Vancouver BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for allowing us to comment on your revisions to the Water Act. Any revision must stress the need to preserve water for environmental flow. The water to be left in the stream must be sacrosanct and carefully monitored.

I am glad that ground water usage is to be monitored. Licences for ground water use should be reasonably priced for domestic users, but industry and business uses should fully reflect the fact that this is a private use of a public resource and is not to be taken lightly.

Licences use should be monitored often and reviewed at least every 5 years.

Water is the basis for all life and must be protected in any way we can

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Maple Ridge BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Campbell River BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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To whom it may concern,

Most of the issues I am concerned with have been addressed in the above passages. I think that particular attention needs to be given to the regulation/granting of big industry water licenses and their actual consumption (this needs to be more closely monitored... Why waste a precious resource, water, to help prop up what should be a shrinking industry, oil and gas, which is already ridiculously subsidized?... Subsidize renewables; water management is an important piece of the puzzle in the future of renewable energies and a smart grid... Water storage/control= electricity storage/control). There should be no exemptions, and no trading of licenses. Fisheries, sustainable forestry management, ecotourism, renewable energy and overall public needs should trump the interests of a handful of companies.

Thankyou for your consideration,

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Sincerely,

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Youbou BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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I work as a local government planner and believe that enabling new local governance models of our water resource is critical. I also believe that groundwater requires a very high level of protection than currently exists. Strong enforcement mechanisms also need to be adopted in order to make the legislation effective. I strongly endorse the priority areas identified by BC's Living Water Smart Team below.

The following are priority areas for improvement that need to be in a new Water Sustainability Act this coming spring:

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Duncan BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for this opportunity to give feedback on the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). BC is in great need of a new Water Act, since the current one is 100 years old. There are a number of things that are proposed for the new WSA that appear to very worthwhile, such as enabling a new governance model that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. However, I am concerned about a number of issues.

First, I am very concerned about the protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values. This water is at the heart of the BC ecosystem. "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and they must be protected in all of the new and existing licences. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.

Second, this new Water Sustainability Act must make it clear that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.

Third, in this world of technological and climate change, 30 years between licence reviews is too long. I do not know what would be practical, but I would think licence reviews every 20 years would be much better.

Again, I commend you for considering the input of local governments and hope that you will consider my comments as you continue to work on the WSA.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

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Victoria BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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- I suggest that private prosecutions be specifically allowed under the legislation without undue interference from government. This would minimize public expense wrt enforcement and allow the public to contribute in a material way.

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Coquitlam BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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The Conservative Government in Ottawa has seriously abrogated its responsibility to the citizens of Canada by destroying the Fisheries Act and the Navigable Waters Act. Omnibus Bill C38 will go down in history as one the most comprehensive ideology driven attacks on the environment ever conceived.

For these reasons and for the health of our citizens, BC desperately needs a new Water Act, but we also need to make sure we get it right! To do that we must use science and proven data.

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American Companies like Nestle should NOT be able to take and sell our precious water right back to us Canadians at no cost to them! Things need to change or we will be in a dire situation in the near future.

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"Water Sustainability Act - Public Input", "Water Sustainability Act - Public Input

Name: Email Address:

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FEEDBACK:

Honourable Mary Polak, Minister of Environment Below is my feedback on the proposed Water Sustainability Act. While it is encouraging to see the BC Government update the 104 year old legislation that governs water in BC, it is essential that it is done right and that the outcome will ensure a truly sustainable water future for the people who call the West Coast home. To that end I am making a clear request that at a minimum the proposed Water Sustainability Act ensure the following outcomes. FIRST NATIONS RIGHTS AND TITLE MUST BE RESPECTED Enough is enough of seeing First Nations interests pushed to the wayside. First Nations have a clear connection to healthy living waterways, ensuring they are involved with the due respect they deserve provides an opportunity not only for stronger water policies and more sustainable management practices, but it also prevents the threat of law suits in the future that drain all of us emotionally and financially. WATER USE FEES MUST MAKE PUBLIC "CENTS" Current industrial/commercial water use fees and the proposed groundwater fee (rental) are set at a ridiculously low rate of 85 cents per 1,000m3. This means that while an average water bill for a family of three in the Lower Mainland, for example, might run around \$650 per year, a multi-national corporation like Nestle is able to get away with paying about one third of that amount while consuming many thousand times more water and making millions of dollars in profit. These low fees point to a major missed opportunity to properly resource better water management and governance in BC. A higher, more appropriate fee structure for both groundwater and surface water is needed. The Water Sustainability Act must ensure that water use fees make public "cents" by: - Ensuring full cost-recovery by increasing fees to cover basic administrative costs to government for responsibly managing groundwater and surface water; - Undertaking a comprehensive review of the pricing structure for surface water licenses and setting groundwater fees sufficiently high to better resource the comprehensive approach to water management outlined in the Proposal, including supporting monitoring and regular license review, flow assessments, and enforcement; and, - Ensuring that fees go specifically toward resourcing water management and governance, rather than into the province's general revenue. BUILD IN SAFEGUARDS TO ENSURE WE CAN CONTINUE TO IMPROVE There is no question we have more work to do, building stronger local relationships between First Nations and other BC residents, reviewing local science to understand the intersections between our ground and surface water systems, and of course building the capacity on a local level to develop and enforce local watershed plans that protect our home waters. With a new BC Water Act, we need to see an increase in the reviews for license holders so we can continually evolve our water use practices and management systems. Instead of the proposed review periods of 30 year (40 years for power purpose licences) we need to see reviews every 10 years. We need to ensure we are building a water management system that prevents us from ever having to deal with water scarcity, not locking us in to long-term unsustainable water use and draining us dry. Thank you for receiving my clear feedback on the Water

Sustainability Act. I look forward to seeing the Act updated to ensure that the minimum benchmarks articulated above are met and that the home waters we all rely on are protected as they should be. Sincerely,

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"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Greetings: I am a downstream riverfront property owner on the North Fork of the Flathead River in Montana and strongly urge the BC government to enact CLEAN WATER initiatives into the new water act. Do NOT exempt oil and gas and coal companies from provisions that seek to sustain clean water from your province's invaluable water resources. Inact strick measures to insure that your water (and Mind!) is not polluted by fracking and other damaging activities that inevitably cause water pullution. I value the water tha flows by my front yard--you should too!

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QUALICUM BEACH. BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Water belongs to the people of BC not the world economies that consider financial costs over human cost of costs to nature. This is not acceptable. Water quality and cleanliness should also be considered and assured through this process. Any infractions should be fined heavily so it is clear that BC holds its water in the highest regard.

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No foreign government owned entity may have a water license. No ownership of crown land. Protect our sovereignty.

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Ladysmith BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Campbell River BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA needs to explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to ALL sectors of industry. No exemptions for forestry or oil and gas.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews need to happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
- Water use fees must make public "cents". Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs for responsibly managing our water, and ensure resources are available for local watershed planning and management enabled under the new Act.
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Duncan BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Courtenay BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "In support of the comments below I wish to re-iterate how imperative it is that BC's water does not become just another marketable commodity like forests and gas, the rights to which are systematically handed over to industry with no regard for the sane and intelligent stewardship of their ecological integrity. It seems that BC is retreating back into the dark ages of plundering its natural treasures for dubious short-term purposes. If it is your role to protect our water, then protect it. That's your first and highest purpose.

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- * There should be a recognition and protection for Karst Landscaped in the New Act. No toxins used on Karst lands and other domestic watersheds.

Karst Landscapes may not adequately filter and cleanse surface water as it becomes grounwater.

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port alberni BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Abbotsford BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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vancouver BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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The following are priority areas for improvement that need to be in a new Water Sustainability Act this coming spring:

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- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. Industrial use must take a back seat to the basic needs of individuals and the environment. People must come before profits. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. Every 10 years is a more realistic review period that will help to account for a dynamic and rapidly changing climate. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
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I want the government to ensure that the public has adequate time to respond to the new WSA and that the draft is given public media attention. I am concerned that the current status as stated will not protect water for the next generation.

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"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Recommendations to Improve EA processes re: Water issues

-Discretionary powers are often used to undermine risks of EA processes for the sake of approval. Establish Mandated Test Times and Methods can help to prevent this.

-Since water is a public commodity, data on it too, should be made fully public.

-If companies use Modflow data, mandate that they support it with the source of data so results

can be reviewed and replicated if need be to facilitate an auditing process. Mandate the use of

quarterly geology and sediment studies to support the findings.

-The Province needs to set a reasonable criteria for what is deemed "outdated" data.

-Currently discretionary powers can be used to pick and choose data based on whatever objectives someone has but the need is there to mandate and define the criteria for what is

deemed reasonable data. Those guidelines should be clearly outlined for all forms of testing associated with planning protocols to secure best management practices are adhered to.

-Test times and methods of testing, particularly in regards to issues regarding rare species must be standardized to the methods that meet reasonable scientific criteria. How long is the minimum requirement to test for rare species? What is the appropriate technique or time of year to test?

Mandate review of potential habitats with Universities, the ROM, Zoos, Conservation authorities and the MNR prior to approval processes to reasonably identify where projects may

have an impact. The data bases already exist. They should be consolidated and cross referenced.

-Bore hole data is often too shallow or too few. To get better quality data to protect water supplies, it requires a minimum depth of 20m. The reason is because the first 12m only reflect sediment influenced by surface water features like rain. You cannot reasonably determine the underlying geology or connectivity to aquifers unless you look at the substrate sediment composition. If there are aquifers in the area, testing should go down 100m to determine aquifer connectivity and vulnerabilities. The benefit is greater understanding on impacts to aquifers and a higher measure of protection for structural integrity issues of projects built on top of these areas.

-Better bore holes with regards to sediment type can prevent many geological risks. Deposits of dolomite can release magnesium in water supplies leading to mood disorders. Gypsum tends to expand upwards and releases calcium sulphur and hydrogen sulphide that can lead to black water issues. In areas of Southwest Ontario there is phenol content in bedrock. There was a blow out in Plattsville that killed every trout in Whiteman's Creek. Geological risks exist but we can't be sure of where these risks are unless we secure proper sediment studies.

-Flood and drought year cycles happen so 2 year studies for flow and flow rates to tributaries and bore hole data for groundwater features should be conducted making sure

that delta water levels are reflected in the data. This includes delta water levels associated with spring thaw. Too often these values are overlooked.

- Establish firm prohibitions on below water table quarry extractions for mining. The MNR lacks the ability to monitor issues like that and the costs of remediation are too high. Unless a reasonable fiscal plan is established to prove the monitoring funds and remediation funding is secure, don't do it.

- Outwash moraines feature long gradual hill slopes on one side, a peak and steep slope on the other side, usually with a surface water feature like wetland, vernal pool or tributary. It is the place where glaciers settled and melted. As they melted, they distributed sediment in waves to create the long slope. Bore holes show these slopes as being clay covered but ground penetrating radar (GPR) reveals these slopes to contain pure recharge for groundwater in between. On radar it's like seeing shingles on a roof with many spaces in between. One such example is the Arkell Research Centre in Guelph. Bore holes show the area to be impervious but with GPR, it reveals that the slope gathers 7% of Guelph's groundwater supply. We need to mandate the use of GPR along outwash moraine systems during the planning process to protect municipal water supplies. The Canadian Geological Survey of Canada can provide further details on these key features.

- If the principles of watershed-based planning are applied to an examination of the environmental and socio-economic context of the moraines, current provincial policies do not adequately protect the ecological integrity and hydrogeology of the moraines. Serious conflicts are inherent in the province's plans for balancing economic growth and ecosystem sustainability. These conflicts must be addressed in a proactive manner through the mandated use of a systems-based approach that requires the explicit prioritization of ecological and hydrological integrity in land use planning.

Sustainability requires regular assessments of where development is feasible and how much growth the natural environment can support.

- The question must be asked, can the ecological capacity of the moraines can realistically accommodate the projected growth?

- What are the cumulative environmental effects from the projected growth.

- A comprehensive systems-based plan for natural heritage protection and land use planning is needed.

- Although the province's land use planning laws and policies are laudable in some respects, sometimes they are ineffective in preventing, curtailing or modifying environmentally destructive developments.

- Natural features, such as moraines, should be the basis upon which local land use planning

decisions are weighed. Yet the province does not specifically identify moraines as a landform or natural heritage feature to be considered for protection.

- I recommend that the long-term ecological function and biodiversity of natural heritage systems are maintained.

- Nobody but an applicant can reasonably prove a project is unsafe because they are the only ones with all the data. It is reasonable to state that it is the applicant of a project with the burden to prove their system is safe. If they can't do that, the project should be cancelled.

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Waterloo BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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I hope that the current government and any and all future governments, will realize that our planet is a closed system with FINITE RESOURCES and

putting money before the interests of all life here is a road to disaster.

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- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

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Kimberley BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Golden BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). BC desperately needs a new Water Act, and it's crucial that we get it right! There are a number of excellent proposals for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation and charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. However, there are many areas that must be improved in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century.

The following are priority issues for a new Water Sustainability Act:

- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values is too discretionary in the WSA Proposal. "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new and existing licences.
- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority. This must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry, with no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas as contemplated in the current proposal.
- In a world of accelerating climate change, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
- Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs for responsibly managing our water, and for local watershed planning and management as enabled under the new Act.
- There need to be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows. BC also needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right.
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Kelowna BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). BC desperately needs a new Water Act, but we also need to make sure we get it right!

I support much of what has been proposed such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. BUT, there are a lot of things that need to be done better in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century.

The following are priority areas that need to be in the new Water Sustainability Act this coming spring:

- The protection of water flows for the protection and maintenance of fish habitat and other environmental values need to be scientifically defined and this protection must be made mandatory in all new and existing licences.
- The WSA needs to explicitly state that neither private nor corporate rights to use water shall harm or put at risk the public's rights and interest. Water flows must assure that high environmental standards are met and maintained while also assuring essential that household needs are a priority over other uses.

The WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.

- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for mutually satisfactory government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
- Water use fees must make public "cents". Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs for responsibly managing our water, and ensure resources are available for local watershed planning and management under the new Act.
- There need to be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows.

The Act should provide for independent oversight of water and watershed management while assuring that the necessary resources and expertise are available for this.

- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step. This commitment must ensure that local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

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Victoria BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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St. John's NL ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "British Columbia needs a new, updated Water Act. To my knowledge, there are issues with what is being proposed. Considering how much of the world's fresh water is in Canada, every province has an obligation to protect its water resources. Water licenses should not be traded in markets. Large industrial uses of water must be carefully regulated and reviewed on a regular basis. Water is a public right. There should be no exemptions for forestry, oil, or gas.

Canada has been sadly falling behind in its environmental stewardship in recent years. The development and implementation of British Columbia's new Water Act is an opportunity to demonstrate that Canada does in fact care about the environment and about protecting water for future generations.

Thank you for your time.

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Toronto ON ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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montreal QC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Vancouver BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "BC's waters are an immensely important resource, especially in the future modeling of climate change, which can see water as a more important resource than oil or gas. Not only is it of importance to us, our personal and commercial needs, but it is even more critical to maintain sufficient clean water for the fish and other wildlife that rely on water for sustenance and habitat. Please consider the wise and sustainable use of water, so that we do not imperil future generations. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). BC desperately needs a new Water Act, but we also need to make sure we get it right! There are lots of good things that are proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. BUT, there are a lot of things that need to be done better in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century.

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It has been said that Canada is not so much an oil nation as it is a water nation. This will be increasingly true as climate change and population put increasing strain on this precious resource. I grew up in a river valley with abundant and clean water that was free. We hauled it in buckets for drinking water and directed it in irrigation ditches to support our hay meadows and our garden. Looking back, I now realize what an incredible luxury and privilege this was. I don't expect my daughter to take that same privilege for granted but I do hope that she and others in future generations will continue to have affordable and safe access to the water resources they need for a healthy and productive life.

The only way to guard water from being exploited and hoarded by corporations is to implement fair and enforceable legislation that will ensure that individual citizens and small farms will continue to have protected equitable access to water resources and that those resources will be managed to privilege environmental concerns and sustainability over the forces of industry and the global resource market.

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Thank you for working to get this right. It matters now and it matters for the future.

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Kleena Kleene BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Madison BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "I do agree with this form letter and just to be clear:

- NO ONE, not individuals or organizations or companies, should be getting our freshwater for free and for their sole profit. A fraction of what is being bottled should be bottled for survival purposes but bottled water is, in most of our developed country, an unnecessary luxury which wastes water and promotes plastic in our landfills. The only exceptions would be in emergency situations such as Native Reservations with contaminated water sources and this only until their water is clean.
- tankers and pipelines are not wanted and put our waterways and our environment at risk. Invest in renewable and environmentally sound energy sources instead. You, our government, should be listening to us, the people, not the dollar signs of the oil industry.

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North Vancouver BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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We need more time than 1 month to fully participate ---especially since the government has been working on this for 4 years. So more time---until spring 2014.

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- There need to be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows. BC also needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right.
- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly. This includes watersheds that are privately owned when they are the source of drinking water for others. I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight.

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Port Alberni BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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I have recently enjoyed reading an excellent and comprehensive book about Canada's environment by David R. Boyd, a BC-based environmental lawyer and adviser. I have learned how vitally important a clean and healthy environment is to Canadians, and yet, how sluggish and disorganized our federal and provincial efforts have been, at enshrining environmental protections for our most vital shared resources. My feeling is that BC and all Canadian provinces and the Federation should set a goal to act on this deficit immediately and comprehensively, making protection of air, land, and water a constitutional right.

I have also this year taken an on-line UBC course on climate literacy and found it an excellent resource and source of clear, unbiased information on the most urgent and important issue of our present and near future. I wish that all government ministers responsible for making decisions around climate, resources, and investment be required to take this course. I could not recommend it highly enough. Recent comments by our Premier and other top ministers have certainly shaken my faith that there is a clear understanding at the upper echelons of our provincial government of what is at stake, how soon, why, and how to work to avoid disaster and future devastation of the climate our children will be faced with.

My feeling is this: we must act urgently, comprehensively, and thoughtfully, to above all, protect the environment and climate from exploitation and damage related to industry objectives. The current and future needs of BC residents must trump the short-term economic goals allied, in particular, with the fossil fuel industry profit motive.

Frankly, I feel it is unethical of any government member to make decisions that affect climate health, and environment, without first urgently obtaining a significant knowledge base on climate change. Keeping blinders on, in the current era, during which so much has been made explicitly and widely and accessibly clear, by the climate research and science community, is as immoral as marketing addictive tobacco and narcotic products to children, only more globally damaging.

We will not be able to retreat from an overheated climate, and the type of devastation that has recently occurred in the Philippines should be the last signal needed, to ensure urgent and serious action. The earlier flooding events this year in central Europe, Calgary, Colorado, and even Toronto, are other unmistakable symptoms of a life-threatening impact that humans are having on the climate. As these type of events escalate further, we'll see any short term profits made by selling our resources to a harmful industry, completely sucked dry, in repair and recovery work.

BC desperately needs a new Water Act, but we also need to make sure we get it right! Safety and security of water supplies for people will be linked to the future health, economic wellbeing, and personal security of our children and grandchildren. There are lots of good things that are

proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. BUT, there are a lot of things that need to be done better in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century.

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- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal. I am completely opposed to expansion of fracking, pipelines, LNG plants and ocean transport of bitumen in BC. All of these undertakings will reduce and delay our ability to mitigate climate change as much as possible, and fracking will reduce the security of our clean water supply.

The current argument that "we are doing the world a favour" by investing in LNG plants and fossil fuel shipments across the ocean are insultingly base and thoughtless remarks. China is investing as rapidly as possible in clean renewables, as they should be, and as BC should be. We should not in any way be aiding the petroleum industry in delaying the inevitable and urgent requirement that we transition to non-carbon based energy sources, by promoting a so-called "lesser evil", instead of a good. This is completely irresponsible, and not likely even good economic policy. The transition to renewables is evolving rapidly enough that it makes no sense to continue to invest billions in the infrastructure required to try to reap some short-term, ill-gotten gains from this dying industry. Invest instead in clean renewables. Stop pretending that the targets are the problem that needs to change; it's the behaviour and choices of people that need to change! If anything, the GHG reduction targets should be more aggressive than what we are currently "committed" to.

- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
- Water use fees must make public "cents". Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs for responsibly managing our water, and ensure resources are available for

local watershed planning and management enabled under the new Act. We can't drink oil and gas. Fresh water should be priced and prized more highly than fuel. We can't get it back if we pump it into a fracking well.

- There need to be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows. BC also needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right. The recent musings on taking agricultural land out of an independent commission and placing its future in the hands of short-term political interests are a shining example of why we cannot trust a government of the day, any day, to be able to sell off to friends and investors our most important and irreplaceable assets.
- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

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Gordon Campbell and Carole Taylor showed the kind of foresight, wisdom, and conscience that was inspirational, in instituting a responsible carbon tax and carbon neutral policies. The current leadership must continue on that enlightened path, rather than sliding backwards to make misguided investments in disappearing and harmful industries, rather than meeting their duty to protect the vital natural resources, climate security, and health of BC. The alliance with western US states is a good thing, and these states are ahead of the pack also, in investing in clean energy and leading technologies like electric vehicle infrastructure. BC could profit by investing in partnership in an expanded network of routes for bicycle and electric powered vehicles for eco-tourism and active tourism. Our tourism industries stand to benefit greatly if we continue in the right direction, but to wither and die, if we show the world that our focus is on making a quick and immoral buck, rather than protecting the Earth's most beautiful environments.

Please, BC government, be a leader and not a laggard. Choose wisdom and conscience over profit and vested interest.

Please read the recently published open letter in Huffington Post by Seattle's Mayor, to the President of Harvard, and please examine the information available at 350.org, as a counter to the spin from industry interests. To quote Bill McKibben, founder of 350.org, "If it's wrong to wreck the planet, then it's wrong to profit from that wreckage." Please read, too, about the concept of a carbon bubble, in respect of the comments made in the latest IPCC report, about how much of known fossil fuel reserves the world can actually afford to "spend", if we are to avoid a disastrous future. Don't invest BC's future in a carbon bubble.

Our children's futures are all at stake, in regard to these vital stewardship decisions. Water is a hugely important piece of the puzzle

for BC's future generations. Thank you again for soliciting input from BC residents.

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Please consider the possibility / probability that you, personally, do not have sufficient water to wash your vegetables, wash your hands, or even flush your toilet. Water must be managed conscientiously.

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Revelstoke BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Harrison Hot Springs BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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New Westminster BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Water Sustainability Act", "Attn: Living Water Smart,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Water Sustainability Act.

Water is the most precious resource in British Columbia, and revision of the Water Act is long overdue.

I do not believe in the first in line concept. I believe that we should determine the access to water in order of priority, a healthy environment first, residential, agriculture, tourism, followed by industry, and mining.

Bulk water exports should never be permitted, and those companies that would seek profit by bottling water should pay for the water at reasonable rates which reflect the high value of the commodity. Any industries which remove water from the hydrologic cycle should pay a high price for the water they remove, and polluters should be encouraged to develop processes to minimize the quantities of water which become toxic due to their processes (for example, gas fracking, tailings ponds and industrial pollution). The rate for water which has been rendered toxic by industrial processes such as gas fracking or mining, should be sufficiently high that companies would be highly motivated to come up with better practices to cause less damage. Industries which damage aquifers or ground water should not be permitted in community watersheds.

With countries all over the globe running out of water, they will be knocking on our door in the not too distant future, seeing us as a water rich country. I do not believe that it would be in our best interest to destroy our own hydrology by exporting water in bulk, but we may one day find ourselves with a vastly increased population. It does not make any sense to squander a resource that all of life on earth depends on. I am talking about the millions of gallons of water that the BC government permits to be wasted daily in the pursuit of natural gas. There should be a moratorium on this industry until they can figure out a way to extract the gas without poisoning water and industrializing the landscape. It is also very important to me that communities have the ability to protect their watersheds, regardless of whether there are private or crown users in the watershed. This includes forestry and mining in particular.

Conservation of water is very important, and I am not adverse to water metering. Too many people squander this precious resource, so there should be a base rate for reasonable water usage and a much higher rate for those who go beyond this. Citizens should be encouraged to harvest rainwater for their gardens, and discouraged from wasting water, like washing their driveways or leaving sprinklers on. This can be done by ongoing public education, including in the schools.

There should be compliance staff who oversee water usage, particularly with industry. Perhaps there could be a system set up like the Harvest Billing System for forestry which would bill out water based on usage. Understanding that the economy needs to stay healthy, but also studying how it works in regions where water is more scarce.

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fanny bay, BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Rossland BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Responsible leadership is required NOW, for the future. Our water is precious for everything. Don't throw it away.

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Prince George BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA).

I want to start off by saying how sickened I am about how the Colorado River is basically drained dry by the time it enters Mexico, before it enters the Pacific Ocean. I do not want that to ever happen to any river in my province, it is too disgusting in its disregard for humanity and nature. Our future demands better.

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"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "It is disturbing that the public has only a month to respond to the proposed new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). Most people will not be able to learn about and familiarize themselves with this document, which appears to me to be industry-friendly to the exclusion of ensuring citizen's rights.

BC desperately needs a new Water Act, but we also need to make sure we get it right! There are lots of good things that are proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. BUT, there are a lot of things that need to be done better in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century.

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comes to water usage. Not one is exempt from these necessary changes. My children will swim in clean water and drink clean water. Every child's future depends on water. The province of British Columbia is one of the most beautiful places on the planet, making these necessary changes will ensure it remains that way for future generations. Thank-you!

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Smithers BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Specifically, I am concerned that industrial groups, such as the natural gas industry, will not need to pay for water used in fracking and other operations. The priority must be to preserve clean water for use by the people, animals, and other living organisms of BC. Industry must pay, and must not adversely affect water quality.

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 - In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations. These should be reviewed initially at least every 2 years and then moving it out to every 5 years with conditions to change this or to investigate at any time.
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 - The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.
- I also feel that there should be a mandate to keep Canadian water protected from trade with other countries.
 - keep waterways protected from oil pipelines and development that can harm or potentially harm the environment regardless of job creation. Any considerations for such should be under high scrutiny and proven scientific investigations.

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North Vancouver BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Water Sustainability Act", "Attn: Living Water Smart,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Water Sustainability Act.

There are some positive initiatives in the proposal, such as regulation of groundwater, improved conservation and efficiency requirements and protection of stream health and aquatic ecosystems.

However, there are some significant gaps and concerns in the policy proposal that must be addressed if we are going to balance competing demands for water, ensure watersheds are healthy, and best serve the public interest through good decision-making and public participation.

Water Allocations: The current water allocation regime, "first-in-time, first-in-right" (FITFIR), is not working, yet the Water Sustainability Act proposal does not tackle the FITFIR regime. Instead, it proposes water licence trading and water markets to deal with allocation that could open the door to the privatization of water, which most British Columbians, including me, do not want to have happen. Instead of moving BC towards water markets, the proposed legislation should consider:

- A watershed based decision making process that allows water users within a basin to determine an equitable allocation in times of drought.
- Government regulation of the ways in which licensees can exercise water entitlement ensuring efficient and sustainable use of resources.

In-Stream Flows: While the policy proposal appears to recognize the need to balance the needs of water for people and water for nature, the proposed in-stream flow measures would only apply to new water users and not to the 44,000 current water licence holders. This is a significant weakness, as is leaving in-stream flow measures as only "guidelines" and not legislated with a robust regulatory framework. Strong regulations for stream flows are our best insurance against further degradation of our natural world and a new water law must have strong, legislated flows to meet the needs for human needs and the environment. A new Water Sustainability Act should:

- Ensure better transparency of hydrological/water licensing data to allow in-stream flow needs to be understood
- Set environmental flow standards
- Develop "precautionary flow numbers" for rivers and streams where incomplete data exists, until more site-specific determinations can be made.

Water Governance: How decisions are made about water will define our future as a province. The new policy proposal attempts to enable a variety of governance approaches, but are vague and lacking in vision. A better system of water governance would recognize that citizen engagement, watershed management groups with multiple sectors represented, and empowered local governments is a better model to decide how we make decisions about water.

I look forward to a strong new law to protect BC's water, for current and future generations.

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duncan, BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Also, regulations need to be enacted to ensure that saline water resources that may be used in processes such as fracking do not contaminate fresh water resources.

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- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
- Water use fees must make public "cents". Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs for responsibly managing our water, and ensure resources are available for local watershed planning and management enabled under the new Act.
- There need to be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows. BC also needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right.
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BC needs a new Water Act, but we also need to make sure it is fair to consumer and industrial/agricultural users and that it provides for sustainable funding to insure enforcement! (I refer obliquely to the assessment of PST on Legal Services, while the assurance that revenues raised would be applied to fund Legal Aid Services.

The following are other areas identified for improvement that need to be in a new Water Sustainability Act this coming spring:

- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values is too discretionary in the WSA Proposal! "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new and existing licences.

- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets. Consideration should also be given when groundwater is not being consumed, but simply exchanged for its heat or cooling properties before being returned in its unchanged form to the aquifer.

- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.

- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations. The transfer or sale of any licence arrangements should be subject to a review process, including the sale of shares of any corporation that may now own such rights, particularly if they may come under foreign control.

- Water use fees must make public "cents". Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs for responsibly managing our water, and ensure resources are available for local watershed planning and management enabled under the new Act. Water drawn for commercial purposes, either for sale as bottled water or production of beer should be priced as royalty on the major BC Resource that it is!

- There need to be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of

environmental flows. BC also needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right.

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"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "TO: BC's Living Water Smart Team

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Water is one of our most precious resources and needs to remain so. Water is a basic human right on the United Nations Charter. Ours must be accessible, clean and publicly owned by the citizens of British Columbia.

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Harrison Hot Springs BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
- Water use fees must make public "cents". Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs for responsibly managing our water, and ensure resources are available for local watershed planning and management enabled under the new Act.
- There need to be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows. BC also needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right.
- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight.

Please show the wisdom and foresight when working on our Water Sustainability Act to think of the future of our children. They have the right to inherit clean water and watersheds as well.

Sincerely,

Personal Identifiers Removed

North Vancouver, BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). BC desperately needs a new Water Act, but we also need to make sure we get it right! There are lots of good things that are proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. BUT, there are a lot of things that need to be done better in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century.

The following are priority areas for improvement that need to be in a new Water Sustainability Act this coming spring:

- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values is too discretionary in the WSA Proposal! "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new and existing licences.
- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
- Water use fees must make public "cents". Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs for responsibly managing our water, and ensure resources are available for local watershed planning and management enabled under the new Act.
- There need to be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows. BC also needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right.
- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight.

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BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). I live in the Okanagan Valley where renewable water is severely limited, so I appreciate the need for effective water management. BC desperately needs a new Water Act, but we also need an act that will put BC at the forefront of effective and sustainable water management. There are lots of good things proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. But many other issues also need to be addressed and done better in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century.

In my view, the following issues need to be fully addressed in a new Water Sustainability Act:

- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values remains discretionary in the WSA Proposal. "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and providing such flows should be mandatory in all new and existing licences. The concept of environmental flows must also recognize the importance of freshwater inflows in driving coastal marine productivity. Water does not flow wasted to the sea.
- The WSA needs to state explicitly that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest. This means that flows to protect the environment and provide for essential household needs must take priority over other uses. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the WSA proposal. Furthermore, the right to use water for industrial purposes should be explicitly coupled with the obligation to clean up any pollution resulting from such industrial use.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is too long. Reviews should happen more frequently, perhaps as often as every 15 years. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to frequent future reviews, perhaps every 5 years, until it can be determined the withdrawals are sustainable.
- Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water withdrawal must cover the costs of managing our water responsibly. Further, resources must be available for local watershed planning and management as proposed in the new Act.
- There need to be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that addresses these issues in a positive and responsible way. BC's water is too precious a resource to be managed as if it were a virtually infinite "free" resource.

Sincerely,

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Peachland BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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cobble hill BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Duncan BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Nanaimo BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Rossland BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Surrey BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Powell River BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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In Williams Lake, our Williams Lake Creek is totally dry most summers. Upstream water licences, mostly to ranchers take a lot of the water. These were licenced as much as 100 years ago when flows were higher but also when conditions were different from today. Since settlement, extensive logging, the beetle killed forest and drier temperatures suggest we need more flexibility in reducing licenced water volumes.

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Williams Lake BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Nelson BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "There are many benefits to the new proposed act.

The following are priority areas for improvement:

- Provisions for domestic watershed reservoirs buffering the climate extremes we are already experiencing must be part of the medium term strategy. Supporting adequate hydrology, engineering and local organizational development is a necessary part and will bring us to more capacity for the broad range of needs being considered by the act.
- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing essential household needs, agricultural requirements and environmental flows over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
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- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the

flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight.

Sincerely,

Personal Identifiers Removed

Vancouver BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for giving us a chance to comment on the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA).

I am very pleased to see that a framework will be put in place to regulate our water resources, both surface and groundwater, and charge for large-scale industrial use of it. I am also pleased that there will be provisions for local authorities such as local governments and First Nations to participate in water resource management planning.

However, there are areas where the WSA proposal needs some fixing:

1. Protecting the flow of water to safeguard the health of water bodies (streams, rivers, lakes) and their inhabitants requires, firstly, a definition of water body health and, secondly, a clear description of how to determine (for example) how much flow is required at what temperature at what times of year. The WSA should not allow anybody the legal choice of seriously damaging or killing a stream, river, or other water body. There should be particularly robust provisions around emergency planning, including monitoring, early event recognition, public notification, effective early response, and availability of sufficient funds to respond to, clean up after, and compensate for damage caused by spills and similar accidents.

2. The WSA should prioritize environmental flow and essential domestic and medical use above all other uses. There should be no exceptions to this - except perhaps as Minister-approved temporary response to a state of emergency such as a massive firestorm or earthquake. In particular, large industrial users, such as oil, gas, and forest industries, should be required in no uncertain terms to adhere requirements the same as anyone else, and the nature of their usage, including the characteristics and volume of fresh water used and management, characteristics, and volume of waste water produced, should be monitored and publicly reported. The WSA should contain clear provisions for efficient enforcement, including penalties proportional to the volume of usage and severity of damage. The penalties must also be large enough so that the bottom line of the water-using corporation will be healthier if the corporation follows the provisions of the WSA than it will be if the corporation doesn't follow them.

3. The WSA should contain provisions that make it clear that water use licenses are specific and non-transferrable. License holders should not be able to sell or trade their water use licenses any more than individuals can sell or trade their driver's licenses.

4. Thirty years is far too long between license reviews. The WSA should specify and enforce specific monitoring, reporting, and recording requirements that will support a transparent, fair, and easy-to-do review process no less frequently than every five years, and sooner if monitoring, reporting, and recording is not being done properly. With appropriate information being collected and reported, reviews should be fast and easy, much more like an audit than is the case with the current situation, which is like an in-depth research project where the subject has every incentive and no disincentive to stall and withhold

information. Consider the financial reporting and review requirements that business must meet and be at least that strict with requirements for water use reporting and review. Water is much more important than money - humans are very creative and we can figure out ways to live without money, but there is no way we can live without water.

5. All license holders, including existing ones, and most particularly large industrial users, should be subject to the same review schedule and process as new license holders: there should be no grandfathering that will make it easier or cheaper for existing license holders to over-draw, pollute, or otherwise damage water resources.

7. Water use fees should be enough to cover the costs of water management, monitoring, enforcement, and planning. If there's no way to pay for appropriate water management and enforcement, it won't get done and nothing will change.

8. The process for granting water licenses, setting the requirements and restrictions on the licenses, and monitoring the licensees' performance in following the requirements of the licenses should all be in the public domain, with a clear mandate for local watershed groups' right to know and ability to veto the granting of licenses with provisions that do not meet the spirit and intent of the WAS. There also must be ample opportunity for public participation.

9. There must be independent oversight of water resource management; a Water Ombudsman with the capacity and expertise to assess water-related issues and the capacity and authority to impose evidence-based decisions when necessary.

I am very much hoping that the new WSA to be introduced next spring will clearly specify what needs to be done to protect our precious water and will have the tools to require everybody, especially big corporate users, to comply with its provisions and to continually and publicly demonstrate their ongoing compliance.

Sincerely,

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Maple Ridge BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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The following are priority areas for improvement that need to be in a new Water Sustainability Act this coming spring:

- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values is too discretionary in the WSA Proposal! "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new and existing licences.
- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
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- There need to be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows. BC also needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right.
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- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
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The following are priority areas for improvement that need to be in a new Water Sustainability Act this coming spring:

- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values is too discretionary in the WSA Proposal! "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new and existing licences. Furthermore "environmental flows" for the protection of fish and other living things must take priority over ALL other uses. Humans can arrange for other supplies of water. Other living things cannot.
- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.
- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.
- In a climate changing world, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.
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Rossland BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). I am a public health physician working at the nexus of climate change, water and health. BC has many small vulnerable water systems and too many communities on boil water advisories. These are not the conditions one expects from a rich and prosperous Province in the developed world.

While we definitely need a new, updated Water Act, we also need to make sure we get it right. I applaud aspects of the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. but this juncture offers great opportunity to modernize BC's water policy.

The following are priority areas for improvement that need to be in a new Water Sustainability Act this coming spring:

First, health must be a priority and no BC communities should have water so contaminated it must be boiled to drink. Additionally,

- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values is too discretionary in the WSA Proposal. "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new and existing licences.

- The WSA needs to explicitly state that any private rights to use water cannot harm the public's interest in our precious water resources by prioritizing environmental flows and essential household needs over other uses. As well, the WSA should explicitly reject attempts to allow licences to be traded in markets.

- The proposed provincial Water Objectives must make protecting "environmental flows" for fish and nature and for essential household needs a priority, must be enforceable and must apply to all sectors of industry. There should be no exemptions for forestry or oil and gas, as contemplated in the proposal.

- In a world where rapid climate change is the new normal, 30 years between licence reviews is not sufficiently flexible; reviews should happen more frequently. As well, the new to protect our precious fresh water. Groundwater licences that are going to be granted to existing users, primarily large industrial users, must explicitly state that they are subject to a future review until it can be determined the withdrawals are at sustainable levels and to allow for honourable government-to-government consultations with First Nations.

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- There need to be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of

environmental flows. BC also needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right.

- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

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Burnaby BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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The government must also ensure that the oil and gas industries not be given exemptions on what may be used, and how it must be protected and governed.

Further, companies like Nestles should not be given licenses to sell our water at outrageous profit given the views of their CEO's Social Darwinistic views that only the privileged who can afford to buy it

should have usage of it. Water needs to be defined as a human right, not a privilege based on economic criterion that exclude all but the wealthy.

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Stop giving away our water.

If we do have a surplus and want to make a sale, let the price be the same or more than I pay for my water and make these sales one-off short term.

But the overriding mandate should be saving our water for the future needs of all living things and the environment.

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Mill Bay BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Surrey, BC Canada ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Ottawa BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "The letter below has itemized several issues of concern that all sound sensible and relevant to me. I am gravely concerned with the climate change issue. Because of the major climate shifts that I think are becoming more and more evident I believe we must take precautionary measures to protect sustainability.

Selling out to big business and simplistic answers to creating jobs will not sustain us in the long run. I am really becoming concerned and will be at the rally on Saturday at Science World regarding the Enbridge pipeline.

My neighbor that I was working for today was saying how the issues of pipelines, sustainability & the climate are beginning to really affect her. I worry for the world my son will face. It amazes me that the world and its people, especially the wealthy, have let climate change go this long. I am starting to think again about getting arrested. Guess I'm getting off track.

Hoping that you will use the highest standards to create this New Water Act.

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"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "I am a former BC resident, now doing a PhD on the effects of climate change on freshwater ecosystems at McGill University. I hope to return to BC upon completion. Freshwater ecosystems are among the most threatened in North America. BC is fortunate to still have much of its freshwater ecosystems in good health. However, in order to ensure that this remains the case it is crucial to have a strong water sustainability act, especially as we anticipate increased stress placed on these sensitive ecosystems as a result of future climate change.

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And to conclude...please, I urge the government not to be short sighted, to think of future generations...water will be the priceless commodity of

the not too distant future, a commodity we cannot afford to flog off to the highest bidder for short term gain!

Sincerely,

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saanichton BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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"Legislative Proposal for a Water Sustainability Act", "My name is Paula Rowlands and I am a mother of two. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Legislative Proposal for a new Water Sustainability Act (WSA). BC desperately needs a new Water Act, but we also need to make sure it protects streams and lakes for wildlife and fish. There are lots of good things that are proposed for the new WSA, such as bringing groundwater under regulation, charging for that water, and enabling new governance models that will allow local governments, First Nations and local stewardship groups to help develop plans for their own watersheds. BUT, there are a lot of things that need to be done better in order to bring BC's water policy into the 21st century.

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- The Act needs to explicitly prioritize the statement that "Water is our most important natural resource: without it, there would be no life on Earth."
- The protection of water flows for fish and other environmental values is too discretionary in the WSA Proposal! "Environmental flows" need to be scientifically defined and it must be made mandatory to meet them in all new and existing licences.
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Fernie BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Cleveland, OH, USA ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Nanoose Bay BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Kimberley BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Please consider my opinion as representing that of thousands of others who didn't take time to write to you. I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has

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- Water use fees must make public "cents". Fee schedules for both groundwater and surface water must cover government's costs for responsibly managing our water, and ensure resources are available for local watershed planning and management enabled under the new Act.
- There need to be more opportunities for the public to participate in the granting of water licenses and the setting and monitoring of environmental flows. BC also needs independent oversight of water and watershed management with the resources and expertise to do it right.
- The commitment to shared governance in local watersheds is a positive step, and it must ensure local watershed groups have a clear mandate and the resources to engage responsibly.

I look forward to seeing a new WSA introduced in the spring of 2014 that includes these improvements and has the tools, the resources and the flexibility to face current and future uncertainties head on, and with our priorities straight.

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Courtenay BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Please consider the future of our province and leave a legacy of protection instead of selling us and the environment out to the highest bidder. I know that disabling the protection of water is in the best interest of those that exploit resources for temporary economic gain but I would like to think that we can protect water systems and still have a vibrant economy.

Thank you for your time,

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Squamish BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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Tsawwassen BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"Proposed New Legislation. and regulatory overhaul of the Water Act.", "Thank you for the opportunity to offer suggestions regarding the Water Act.

My concern is with respect to ground water regulation.

Mine is a groundwater dependent family. I am now the executor of my parents' acreage in the Cowichan Valley. When they were alive and raising their 8 kids, all of us together with our cattle, horses and other livestock were blessed to depend on spring water that still flows year-round across our beach into Cowichan Bay.

In the 1960's with the building of suburban sub-divisions, a mobile home park and more intensive irrigated crops above our property, although there was and is water for all, the quality is awful.

When neighbours campaigned for public water, the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) eventually listened and added a public rural water supply option on a first come/first served basis. I did not learn until after my parents passed away that they had not asked to be added to the public system.

When we approached the CVRD for access to the new system in early 2013 we were denied. The new water system was installed on Lanes Road, Cowichan Bay in 2012. This is not because the system lacks capacity, but rather because the mobile home park immediately adjacent to my parent's estate and which has not applied to access the system would be given priority.

This is why there must be provincial over-site or some sort of external 3rd-party adjudicator. Perhaps the water equivalent of the Agricultural Land Reserve.

Our family have learned first hand in the example above that local government can be simply too easily swayed by tiny local issues.

We now run the risk of our parent's estate being the only property not allowed access to clean potable water in their neighbourhood. Further, as the waterfront property down-slope from about 50 residential septic fields, we seem to be becoming a primary recipient of the extra domestic waste water created from the new water system based on the declining quality of the water in our recently refurbished well.

You new water act needs to have the capacity to overrule local decision makers to insure all British Columbians find fair and impartial treatment with respect to allocation, protection and stewardship of our ground water resources.

Thanks for considering my concern.

Personal Identifiers Removed

Victoria BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

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"Water Sustainability Act", "Attn: Living Water Smart,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Water Sustainability Act.

There are some positive initiatives in the proposal, such as regulation of groundwater, improved conservation and efficiency requirements and protection of stream health and aquatic ecosystems.

However, there are some significant gaps and concerns in the policy proposal that must be addressed if we are going to balance competing demands for water, ensure watersheds are healthy, and best serve the public interest through good decision-making and public participation.

Water Allocations: The current water allocation regime, "first-in-time, first-in-right" (FITFIR), is not working, yet the Water Sustainability Act proposal does not tackle the FITFIR regime. Instead, it proposes water licence trading and water markets to deal with allocation that could open the door to the privatization of water, which most British Columbians, including me, do not want to have happen. Instead of moving BC towards water markets, the proposed legislation should consider:

- A watershed based decision making process that allows water users within a basin to determine an equitable allocation in times of drought.
- Government regulation of the ways in which licensees can exercise water entitlement ensuring efficient and sustainable use of resources.

In-Stream Flows: While the policy proposal appears to recognize the need to balance the needs of water for people and water for nature, the proposed in-stream flow measures would only apply to new water users and not to the 44,000 current water licence holders. This is a significant weakness, as is leaving in-stream flow measures as only "guidelines" and not legislated with a robust regulatory framework. Strong regulations for stream flows are our best insurance against further degradation of our natural world and a new water law must have strong, legislated flows to meet the needs for human needs and the environment. A new Water Sustainability Act should:

- Ensure better transparency of hydrological/water licensing data to allow in-stream flow needs to be understood
- Set environmental flow standards
- Develop "precautionary flow numbers" for rivers and streams where incomplete data exists, until more site-specific determinations can be made.

Water Governance: How decisions are made about water will define our future as a province. The new policy proposal attempts to enable a variety of governance approaches, but are vague and lacking in vision. A better system of water governance would recognize that citizen engagement, watershed management groups with multiple sectors represented, and empowered local governments is a better model to decide how we make decisions about water.

I look forward to a strong new law to protect BC's water, for current and future generations.

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And finally, the water companies that currently do not pay any fees for extracting groundwater should be required to pay a fair price for immense volumes of this precious resource they use freely. No industrial site, oil or mining company should get away without paying for resources it uses, abuses and contaminates. Heavy charges and fees should apply for this treatment of resources. Moreover, all of them should be required to use non potable water in the production and they should have no access to potable water for their industrial activities. Canadian taxpayers pay for making our water potable and safe. Industry uses it and contaminates it.

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However, there are some significant gaps and concerns in the policy proposal that must be addressed if we are going to balance competing demands for water, ensure watersheds are healthy, and best serve the public interest through good decision-making and public participation.

Water Allocations: The current water allocation regime, "first-in-time, first-in-right" (FITFIR), is not working, yet the Water Sustainability Act proposal does not tackle the FITFIR regime. Instead, it proposes water licence trading and water markets to deal with allocation that could open the door to the privatization of water, which most British Columbians, including me, do not want to have happen. Instead of moving BC towards water markets, the proposed legislation should consider:

- A watershed based decision making process that allows water users within a basin to determine an equitable allocation in times of drought.
- Government regulation of the ways in which licensees can exercise water entitlement ensuring efficient and sustainable use of resources.

In-Stream Flows: While the policy proposal appears to recognize the need to balance the needs of water for people and water for nature, the proposed in-stream flow measures would only apply to new water users and not to the 44,000 current water licence holders. This is a significant weakness, as is leaving in-stream flow measures as only "guidelines" and not legislated with a robust regulatory framework. Strong regulations for stream flows are our best insurance against further degradation of our natural world and a new water law must have strong, legislated flows to meet the needs for human needs and the environment. A new Water Sustainability Act should:

- Ensure better transparency of hydrological/water licensing data to allow in-stream flow needs to be understood
- Set environmental flow standards
- Develop "precautionary flow numbers" for rivers and streams where incomplete data exists, until more site-specific determinations can be made.

Water Governance: How decisions are made about water will define our future as a province. The new policy proposal attempts to enable a variety of governance approaches, but are vague and lacking in vision. A better system of water governance would recognize that citizen engagement, watershed management groups with multiple sectors represented, and empowered local governments is a better model to decide how we make decisions about water.

I look forward to a strong new law to protect BC's water, for current and future generations.

Sincerely,

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Ucluelet, BC ***Personal Identifiers Removed***

"comments re proposed new Water Act", "Dear Premier Clark, Minister Polak and the Living Water Smart Team:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft proposal for the Water Sustainability Act (WSA).

We are in general agreement with the need to have a new Water Act in B.C., and with the various ideas we see in the Overview in regard to modernized water management practices. We have a specific interest in seeing updated and improved laws for the issuance, monitoring, and review of surface water licenses. And we believe that a constructive update of the water license provisions may well help facilitate what we understand to be another provincial priority: to significantly reduce the great number Boil Water Notices currently in effect on water systems throughout the province.

We are owners and residents of a strata property situated at small lake in the North Okanagan/Shuswap area of B.C., and have lived here for nearly 20 years. Our strata corporation operates its own small water system (maximum 14 households), the water for which is sourced from a fairly shallow well. The system has been under a Boil Water Notice for a number of years and the Interior Health Authority has recently entered it into the Provincial Boil Water Notice Remediation Program. The strata company very much wishes to provide safe, potable water for its users, and thereby remove the Boil Water Notice. But, like hundreds of other small water systems in BC, we have held back from doing so because of the prohibitively high cost of implementing and operating an appropriate water treatment facility.

We are fortunate in that physically our system could easily access the surface water of the adjacent lake as a water source, and engineering studies (paid for by our strata) have indicated that treating the lake water to legal standards would be much less expensive than treating our well water. Hence if we had, or could obtain, a lake-water license, that would fast-track our system getting off the Boil Water Notice Program.

The only reason we are not doing this: there are no new water licenses available for our lake, and this has been the unchanging situation for many years. Of the licenses which do exist, many were issued decades ago and their present use may or may not follow original specifications, and/or actual current needs.

So we and our neighbors have a direct interest in a reform of water license law which would enable situations such as ours to be justly monitored and regularly reviewed. We welcome and encourage the indications in sections 5 and 6 of the Overview that the new law may enable (perhaps, in our case, through Area-Based Regulations, as described) a public and legal framework for re-allocations of surface water licenses to equitably reflect contemporary uses, needs, and values.

While introducing a water-license review process on a 30-year rotation would be a positive step, we would prefer that the new law include even more frequent reviews, such as every 20 years or less.

It's easy for us to imagine that such an opening-up of the water license situation would give others who have problematic wells, or who contemplate digging a new well, some additional options for sourcing water. Perhaps this would be an aid in realizing the goals set out in Section 3 of the Overview such as stewardship of ground-water supplies and protection of sensitive aquifers. In our case, if we were able to source lake water, we would be discontinuing the use of our existing well.

While we cannot speak in facts and figures as to how many other small (& large) water systems in British Columbia would benefit from updating water licensing provisions as we've described, we strongly suspect that our situation is hardly unique. Among the many positive reasons for the implementation of a new Water Act, we urge the government to include consideration of the public benefit of fewer Boil Water Notices, and, more generally, of enabling more practical options for all who need to develop or improve their source of drinking water.

Yours sincerely,

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Enderby BC