



January 20, 2006

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ORCs: 0309845/0346382
Reference: 85175

Joe Harrison, President
Area "A" Quality Water Association
C/O C13, S10, RR #1
Garden Bay BC V0N 1S0

Dear Mr. Harrison:

Thank you for your letter of September 1, 2005, addressed to Alec Drysdale, A/Regional Manager, Land and Water British Columbia Inc. regarding the Environmental Appeal Board (EAB) decision on Hotel Lake and related water planning issues of the Pender Harbour area of the Sunshine Coast.

With government's recent reorganization, the Ministry of Environment is now responsible for all water management functions. During the reorganization, Mr. Drysdale was assigned to the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and is no longer the Regional Water Manager for the Lower Mainland. A new Regional Water Manager will be appointed for the Lower Mainland in due course. In the interim, I will respond to your letter.

Regarding your enquiry concerning the necessary follow up action on the EAB decision as outlined on pages 22 and 23 of the decision document, staff in the Lower Mainland office have initiated action on this matter and are working with local government and the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD), with a view to implementing the EAB recommendations. As you are aware, these recommendations include limiting the amount of water to be withdrawn from Hotel Lake, a water balance study, setting a minimum water level for Hotel Lake and a master water plan. All these call for comprehensive scientific studies addressing site-specific issues. Local government will take the lead in hiring consultants to ensure that appropriate studies are completed. All stakeholders, including your Water Association (Association), will have opportunities to contribute to the studies. The Ministry of Environment will provide assistance to the local government to complete the studies in a timely manner. All new applications from local water purveyors to draw water from any water bodies in the area needs to be consistent with the findings of the studies.

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Ministry of Environment Water Stewardship Division
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I share your thoughts for the need to amalgamate the three waterworks in the Pender Harbour area as this would enhance the tax base for future infrastructure works in the area. It is also our policy to encourage water purveyors to amalgamate in similar situations, as you have suggested.

I understand from your letter that Fisheries and Oceans Canada has completed a water balance study related to endangered Sockeye salmon and Mixal Sub-basin Coho for one of the lakes in the area, Sakinaw Lake. In addition, your Association is proposing a surface and groundwater assessment study for the Sakinaw basin, similar to the one underway in the Okanagan Basin Climate Study. I trust the consultants who would be engaged by SCRD to conduct the studies required for the implementation of the EAB recommendations would carefully review these and other related studies that would become available at the time of their work.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to address your concerns. If you have any questions, please contact Bob Herath in the Lower Mainland office at (604) 586 4423.

Sincerely,



Glen Davidson, P.Eng.
Deputy Comptroller of Water Rights

pc: Steve Lee, Manager, Infrastructure, Sunshine Coast Regional District
Randy Christensen, Sierra Legal Defence Fund
Chair, Environmental Appeal Board
Daniel Point Developers
Bob Herath, Lower Mainland Regional Operations