



The
WATERWEALTH
Project

All Candidates Questionnaire

April 18, 2013

The Importance of our Water Wealth

Context: As we talk with more and more people in our communities, the WaterWealth Project is hearing that clean, safe and flowing water in the Valley is one of people's biggest concerns. We've attached the results of our community survey. This survey is echoed by a 2010 McAllister Opinion Research poll that showed 94% of British Columbians believe water is our most important natural resource.

Question 1: If you become our local representative, where will freshwater protection place on your priority list?

1st 2nd 3rd Other

Comments:

It is a high priority but I don't think it can be expressed as a number. Control of our land and water supply is as important as sovereignty. Whoever controls the land and water owns the land and water. Do we accept that companies with dump trucks and backhoes should control our destiny? This is a very important issue indeed.

Community Control Over Our Local Home Waters

Context: We are also hearing that people are frustrated with having little to no voice in the decisions that affect our local home waters such as the lack of meaningful consultation on the Kinder Morgan pipeline, the chlorination of drinking water in Chilliwack, and the development of the Aggregate Pilot Project.

Question 2: Do you support greater community involvement in decisions that affect our local home waters and the right for our communities to say 'yes' or 'no' to major proposals that affect us?

Answer:

India has a problem with water regulation. Sand is being depleted from river beds and river's water supplies are being depleted because of it. India has no regulation on aggregate mining. Countries that are good examples of proper regulation are Australia, the 27 countries in the EU, and the province of Ontario. We should consider that it appears that BC's water policies are dangerously close to that of India's. This must change.

Question 3: Would you support the formation of a citizens roundtable or watershed board co-chaired by First Nations and non-First Nations community members to provide leadership on a long-term protection plan for our local home waters?

Answer:

Yes. This appears to be standard among the 27 countries of the EU and Ontario. Again, BC's policies should resemble the responsible policies of these countries and Ontario, not India's.

Indigenous Rights and Title

Context: The waters of the Valley and the life sustained within it have supported Indigenous communities for thousands of years. Long before the first visit of Simon Fraser in 1808, this water wealth allowed them to develop sustainable economies and governance systems. As long-term stewards of lakes, rivers and streams, indigenous communities nurtured the healthy waters we enjoy today.

Question 4: Given that recognition of indigenous rights and title is essential for the long-term protection of our shared home waters, what would you bring to the table to support First Nations-Crown reconciliation of rights and responsibilities?

Answer:

All Canadians need to work together to ensure the protection of our home waters. Many indigenous relations with non-indigenous Canadians are now based on mutual regard for each other's well-being and dignity. We have worked hard to forge these relationships and should not allow them to become irrelevant. Foreign and even domestic companies should not be able to bypass the process that we have gone through to forge these great relationships and control the land.

It's difficult to speak of indigenous rights and title in a blanket statement. For example, I'm extremely shaken by the recent results of Yale's land settlement and words spoken by a Stolo tribal council's comments and concerns against that settlement. For example there was mention of blood being spilled. Blanket statements are at best meaningless but most likely harmful.

The BC Water Act

Context: The BC Water Act, our most important piece of water legislation, is over 100 years old and completely out-dated. It has no provision to ensure there is enough water in rivers and streams to support fish ('ecosystem flows'); it doesn't put any limits on groundwater withdrawals (BC is the only jurisdiction in Canada with no rules for groundwater removal); and it allocates fresh water through an antiquated system called First in Time, First in Right.

Question 5: Do you support the implementation of a NEW BC Water Act that would ensure enough water flows through our home waters for fish and other wildlife, enacts groundwater protection, creates the framework to enable comprehensive community planning for water protection, and respects indigenous rights and title?

Answer:

Yes to all those points. But again a blanket statement about indigenous rights and title is irresponsible.

Drinking Water Protection

Context: The recent controversy around the decision to chlorinate Chilliwack's drinking water has highlighted the importance of keeping contaminants out of our drinking water sources (like the Vedder-Sardis aquifer) in the first place. Experts agree the best way to protect drinking water and reduce the need for expensive treatment solutions is to protect the source of drinking water.

Question 5: Do you support comprehensive provincial source water protection legislation that would empower local communities to work with government to develop enforceable plans to protect their drinking water?

Answer:

Yes. Again, this is not reinventing the wheel. BC can have legislation that involves local residents and governments being at the table in regards to protecting water sources. I am the candidate here represent small non-intrusive government. I am the candidate encouraged by my leader to represent Chilliwack first and foremost.

Your Position on Threats to Our Home Waters

Context - **Kinder Morgan** is increasing transportation of heavy bitumen oil through its existing **TransMountain pipeline** that crosses 100 rivers and streams on its route from Alberta through the Fraser Valley. It is proposing to **triple** the amount of oil transportation from 300,000 to 890,000 barrels per day by building a new pipeline. Since 2005, there have been four ruptures along the existing pipeline. In 2012, a similar pipeline carrying bitumen ruptured and emptied 3,000,000 litres of bitumen into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan, devastating an entire community and becoming the costliest pipeline spill in US history.

Question 6: What is your position on a) the increasing transportation of bitumen through the existing Kinder Morgan pipeline and b) the creation of a new pipeline to triple the capacity of heavy oil transportation?

Answer:

Again, I'm extremely pleased to say that no corporate or special interest group donations were received by me. I represent the people. It makes no difference to my career, politically or not, whether Kinder Morgan gets to twin the pipeline. However, I'm not like Adrian Dix. He said he wouldn't make a decision until he had all the facts. Now he's against it. He is grandstanding on issues out of his control. He is ruining relationships with Alberta and Canada while empowering unethical oil regimes like Saudi Arabia for futile grandstanding. I support rational discussion, no fear mongering, my party doesn't threaten to be absent from discussions. We want to be relevant and not give the National Energy Board a reason to bypass us because we're unreasonable.

Context: Government and the aggregate industry has developed the **Aggregate Pilot Project**, which maps out very large areas of this region that would be open to mining for corporate profit. This has been developed with limited input from local communities despite the substantial impact this mining could have on our rivers, lakes, and groundwater that are our drinking water sources, and which support fish, wildlife and local economies.

Question 7: Do you support the Aggregate Pilot Project?

Answer:

With a 100 year old BC Water Act and no watershed authority in place like Ontario, the 27 countries in the EU, Australia and more, it's difficult for me to grasp how the APP can be supported as is.

Context: Scientific experts such as Marvin Rosenau and Otto Langer have shown that the practice of **in-river gravel mining** can be extremely damaging to salmon and other fish habitat, and has questionable benefits for flood control. They have called for the development of a long-term management plan for dealing with this issue for 15 years.

Question 8: Do you support the development of a long-term management plan for sediment removal developed with full involvement of First Nations, scientific experts, and community members?

Answer:

Let's pretend for a moment that I'm a cold hearted, bottom line businessman. I just finished a 75 page business plan for a guided fishing resort on the Fraser River. Just the guided fishing industry alone is astronomical financially for the Fraser Valley. This entire industry should and would be concerned of any fish habitat changes. If you want advocates you have them in these people and thousands of their customers from all over the world.

Private Hydroelectric Diversions (also known as Independent Power Projects) - a freedom of information request from the Wilderness Committee discovered 700 instances of non-compliance at 16 private diversions in the past few years, indicating regulatory disarray for this industry. These projects can cause significant harm to fish habitat if improperly installed and operated and the cumulative impacts can be extremely disruptive to river systems.

Question 9: Would you support undertaking a comprehensive cumulative environmental assessment prior to approving any new private hydroelectric diversions in the Fraser Valley?

I would have to consult with the experts on this first. It's too easy to support studying everything and I don't even know to what extent it should be studied.