



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:** I see my priorities as set by my constituents; I don't rate them in a mathematical way. My priorities are to do my job as MLA; to represent and serve my constituents effectively according to their priorities.

### 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:** In principle, of course I support community involvement in decisions that affect local issues. The decision-making process aligns with our structures of representative democracy.

**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:** BC Liberals have promised to consult and pass a Water Sustainability Act. These kinds of proposals will be considered as part of the consultative process.

## 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:** Aboriginal rights and title are fully recognized by the courts, and the BC Liberals have an ongoing treaty process to promote reconciliation as well as a number of different programs to ensure their full participation in the economic life of the province.

## 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:** The BC Liberals have already consulted on an updated Water Act, and will consult and pass a Water Sustainability Act in 2013/14.

## 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:** See answer to question 4. While I support local community input, the province must have oversight over water issues, simply because the decisions of local communities can negatively impact other communities.

## **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:** I support the Premier's five-point plan to judge whether or not the pipeline should go ahead. Once we go through the process outline in the five points, we will have the information we need to make a good decision.

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:** I support an approach to gravel mining that is sensitive to all parties.

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:** The BC Liberals, in our election platform, promise a long-term program for gravel removal from the Fraser River.

**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?**

**Answer:** I don't think it's necessary. The process is already quite comprehensive.