

B. C. TAP WATER ALLIANCE

Caring for, Monitoring, and Protecting
British Columbia's Community Water
Supply Sources

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CAMPBELL GOVERNMENT FORCES WASTE OF \$10 MILLION TO SUBSIDIZE LOGGING OF ARROW CREEK IN ERICKSON REFERENDUM

Vancouver - On Saturday February 9, 2002, the community of Erickson, B.C., will hold a referendum for an \$11 million membrane filtration proposal to treat Arrow Creek, the drinking water source for both Erickson and Creston. In January 2001, the B.C. government forced the Erickson Improvement District (EID) into receivership, on grounds of incompetence, which we believe were unsubstantiated. The appointed consultant, Dave Wilson, who took charge of the administration of the EID, initiated the decision for a referendum, the wording of which was done without community involvement. Instead of pursuing a less expensive and highly effective ultraviolet (UV) treatment system for about \$1 million, which the EID investigated and favored, Wilson introduced an international corporation, CH2M HILL, to propose the overkill "Cadillac" system for membrane filtration. If approved, federal and provincial taxpayers will both contribute \$6.6 million to the infrastructure costs, and \$4.3 million by community taxpayers, along with high annual maintenance costs for the membrane treatment.

"We believe that the recent decision to begin road building and logging in Arrow Creek is why federal, provincial, and community tax dollars are going into this proposal for membrane filtration. There is no other logical explanation," says Will Koop, coordinator of the B.C. Tap Water Alliance. "The forest in Arrow Creek, which is still in a mostly undisturbed state, produces exceptionally high drinking water quality. By protecting Arrow Creek from logging, roadbuilding and other developments, and by implementing inexpensive and highly effective water treatment through UV technology, the public will save millions. UV technology has gained world-wide acceptance due to scientific studies which have linked chlorine disinfection by-products with cancer."

As reported in a recent case history study by Will Koop, the EID objected to and prevented logging in Arrow Creek since 1970, and has successfully functioned since 1929 to provide high quality raw drinking and irrigation water from Arrow and Sullivan Creeks to the two communities without treatment. Should the \$11 million expenditure be approved it would automatically dissolve the EID, as Improvement Districts do not qualify for provincial or federal service grants. Politically, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK), a 20 percent shareholder in the Creston Valley Forest Corporation which is logging Arrow Creek, would then take over the EID's assets and liabilities and qualify for the grants. The RDCK has control over 7 other community water works: Lister, Duhammel Ck., South Slocan, Denver Siding, Riodel, Lucas Rd., and Sanca Park.

“It would appear that the RDCK is in a conflict of interest,” remarked Koop. “The back room politics and lack of public accountability around the provincial government’s attempts to dissolve the EID, along with the numerous schemes to log and degrade the Arrow Creek Watershed Reserve, despite thirty years of strenuous efforts by the community, are quite disturbing. The provincial and regional governments should immediately do the right things: stop the referendum, restore the EID, reinstate the Trustees, cancel the logging licence for Arrow Creek, and implement UV as the alternate treatment system.”

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