

B. C. TAP WATER ALLIANCE

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

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The B.C. Tap Water Alliance and the Society Promoting
Environmental Conservation (SPEC) Press Release

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SPEC calls Forest Minister Wilson's plan for logging in watersheds - "stab in the back."

Vancouver - On February 12, BC Forests Minister Gordon Wilson unveiled a discussion paper on legislation that would give Crown lands outside of provincial and national parks to the logging industry. The paper refers to these areas as the "Working Forest". Wilson made his announcement at the end of the government's consultation process on its draft plan to protect BC drinking water sources.

"The timing of Wilson's proposed Working Forest legislation, coming at the end of the public consultation process, really stinks," said Will Koop, SPEC Watershed Campaigner. "It's like he stuck a knife in our backs. First both the Premier and Environment Minister Ian Waddell promised to protect the hundreds of BC's drinking water sources which are threatened by logging. Now at the eleventh hour, Wilson wants to give away our drinking watersheds to the "Working Forest". Were these Ministers afraid of the public during the drinking water consultation process? Is that why we learned about Wilson's scheme just now?"

Wilson is facing opposition in his own riding from the Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) following a public referendum that called for an end to logging and mining in the Chapman and Gray watersheds. The SCRD now wants the provincial government to give legislative control of the watersheds to the Regional District.

Wilson is scheduled to make a presentation in Kamloops to the annual meeting of the Association of B.C. Professional Foresters (ABCPF) this Friday (12:30-2pm, Minister's Luncheon Address, Best Western Hotel) where he is expected to bring up the proposed legislation for the Working Forest. There are about 4,000 registered professional foresters in BC, who are employed by government, university and the private sector.

"The ABCPF advocates industrial forestry practices in drinking watersheds, and some of their members have vested interests in doing just that," said Koop. "We have written to the president of the ABCPF and requested him to present a motion to their annual meeting to protect BC drinking watersheds from industrial activities. All of us in BC must help implement immediate measures to protect the future of our drinking water sources, and the most obvious body to do so is the Association of Professional Foresters."

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