

B. C. TAP WATER ALLIANCE

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

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CANFOR TO BLAME FOR LOGGING AND GRAVEL MINING IN THE SUNSHINE COAST'S WATER SUPPLY

Canfor (Canadian Forest Products), BC's largest forest company partially owned by tycoon Jimmy Pattison, has reignited a heated controversy and angered Sunshine Coast residents. Canfor recently sold an 880-hectare parcel of second growth forestland, located in the Chapman Creek Watershed Reserve, the Sunshine Coast Regional District's (SCRD's) source of drinking water, to North Vancouver-based AJB Investments Company Ltd. The reason why Canfor sold the land is because the SCRD has insisted on an end to all logging in Chapman Creek since the May 1998 public referendum where 88 percent of voters rejected future logging and mining in the severely damaged and unstable community watershed.

Instead of giving the land back to the community after a very long and extremely profitable tenure, the corporation decided to off-load its holdings directly above the community drinking water intakes to a company with vested interests in gravel mining development. On July 15, 2004 AJB Investments, which had already profited by logging on its newly acquired property and raised the hackles of the SCRD Board, through its subsidiary SureSpan Bridges, submitted a gravel mining application to the Ministry of Mines, which is currently undergoing a 30-day public review period. The SCRD has angrily denounced the proposal, the first ever in Chapman Creek, the watershed that endured severe, destructive logging practices from the late 1960s until 1993.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the Ministry of Forests coordinated and advocated the concept of "multiple use" - logging, mining, and cattle grazing - in the public's drinking water sources. It was under this banner, and later, under the concept of "integrated resource management" that the Ministry of Energy and Mines began to integrate its proposals with the Ministry of Forests. The go-ahead for the AJB - SureSpan proposal appears to rest largely on Ministry of Forests road approvals and not on the SCRD water supply function.

However, the B.C. Tap Water Alliance has discovered a procedural flaw in the government referral process for this gravel proposal. The Ministry of Mines failed to advise the Ministry of Health's new Provincial Drinking Water Officer and his regional Water Protection Officer of the proposal. The new agency has the mandate, under the Campbell government's revision of the *Drinking Water Protection Act*, to oversee all drinking water source controversies such as this.

"Canfor is largely to be blamed for this incident. They wanted to get the hell out of the Chapman and in the end had no regard for the SCRD and its citizens," claims Will Koop, Coordinator of the B.C. Tap Water Alliance. "There is only one credible option for government and that is to reject this application. What AJB is proposing is completely inconsistent with water quality objectives, and would create a dangerous precedent for other BC drinking water sources. What is very disturbing is that, in spite of its brand-new mandate, the Ministry of Health has once again been side-lined during a critical public process, where the obvious decision by the Medical Health official would be for the proposal's outright rejection."

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Please contact: Will Koop at email: info@bctwa.org. Also available: See website, under *Presentations*, for a report to the provincial Aggregate Review Panel, November 21, 2000, regarding Chapman Creek.