

Director Rees,

How is the SCR D going to protect our drinking water from industrial activity?

Although in Area A we don't get water from the Chapman/Gray Watershed Reserve, we need you, our Regional District representative, to insist that the SCR D intervene in the court case to defend Chapman Creek with the strongest measures at its disposal. Immediate, bold action to support citizens' efforts to prevent harm to that watershed offers the best opportunity we may ever have to protect our own area's water supply. The long-term cost of losing this opportunity exceeds the highest potential cost of losing in court, while the prize for winning could be to set a limit on the damage business can cause in its search for gain.

This is a rare opportunity because the cost to the public of logging in this watershed so grossly outweighs the gain: if we can't win Chapman Creek, we can't win anywhere. This is the kind of unstable watershed where removal of forest always affects water quality over a long term. Victory can be won at least expense on this favourable ground, with massive public support and determined, well-researched grassroots volunteers on your side. Take the risk now. Use our tax dollars to get the best legal advice. Seizing the opportunity to set a precedent through this case, we'll gain vital momentum and advantage for every future watershed battle near and far. But if we hesitate and watch passively as corporate lawyers ride roughshod over a few brave individuals, then the public will find ourselves disadvantaged and defensive in every battle afterward, from Burns Lake to Yahk. (You are aware there is a strong likelihood that Area A's Ruby, North, and Waugh Lake watersheds will be the very next to go.)

Coast residents need to be represented by advocates who will fight effectively for us. Do not let them rest only on the defense that "This watershed serves 23,000 people, therefore this one should be protected."

Insist that they argue every citizen's right to clean _sources_ of water. Have them demonstrate that water soiled, then filtered and treated, is not an equivalent substitute. Communities should not be expected to pay to remediate the result of abusing our lands and waters for the sake of private profits or provincial stumpage revenue.

This case is exactly what we pay our taxes for. Study and defense of vital common goods like public safety and clean water are costs no

individual can afford, but together we can do it. As Llewelyn Keates remarked at the recent water meeting at Roberts Creek Hall: if we can raise millions for a pool for our kids to pee in, we can afford thousands to defend clean water for them to drink.

Maureen Parrott, Paul Juffs, Michael Parrott, and Billy Griffith