

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 Backs Medical Health Officer Peck's Call for Protection of Drinking Watersheds

Vancouver - BC deputy provincial health officer Dr. Shaun Peck is correct in demanding that BC drinking watersheds be protected from logging and pesticide use. Citing at least 28 outbreaks of water-borne illnesses in BC, Peck is calling for tough legislation to protect BC watersheds. Peck notes that the Greater Vancouver and Victoria watersheds have a unique advantage over other BC watersheds because they are publicly controlled and their local governments prevented logging and other industrial activities. Peck's comments come just as the BC Environment Ministry completed a public consultation process on its draft Drinking Water Protection Plan that Environment Minister Ian Waddell is proposing as the basis of new legislation to protect drinking water.

"We support Dr. Peck's concerns about logging in watersheds," said Will Koop, SPEC Watershed Campaigner. "Many BC medical health officials have recommended a stop to logging in watersheds for almost a hundred years, yet our provincial governments, which have known of their concerns, have failed to implement those recommendations."

Koop has submitted a 33-page response (see websites) to Waddell's draft Plan that details how the forest industry has unduly influenced provincial legislation and regulations covering community watersheds. SPEC and a coalition of 37 other community groups across BC want Waddell to protect drinking watersheds by creating Watersheds Reserves that exclude industrial activities such as logging and mining.

"We are disappointed by Forest Minister Gordon Wilson's February 12 Working Forest scheme that would give away control of community watersheds to logging companies," said Koop. "Wilson not only appears to be out of step with Dr. Peck's findings, but also with his own constituency where the Sunshine Coast Regional District held a referendum demanding the same control over their drinking watersheds that Vancouver and Victoria now enjoy."

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