

B. C. TAP WATER ALLIANCE

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

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ALLIANCE CALLS ON CABINET MINISTERS HAGEN AND DE JONG TO RESIGN

Vancouver - The B.C. Tap Water Alliance is calling for the immediate resignation of two provincial B.C. Liberal Party Cabinet Ministers, Comox Valley MLA and Minister of Sustainable Resource Management Stan Hagen, and Abbotsford-Mount Lehman MLA and Minister of Forests Michael de Jong, for their shameless backing of the Working Forest legislation, *Bill 46*, recently passed in the Victoria Legislature.

The legislation, when linked to controversial changes to the *Land Act* under Hagen's Ministry, would dedicate the province's Community Watershed Reserves to commercial resource activities - something industry has been after for over 40 years. As summarized in the Alliance's 100-page submission to Hagen's Ministry, *The Working Forest: "End of the Commons"*, April 30, 2003 (see website), the new Working Forest legislation would undo approximately 100 years of existing legislation specifically designed to protect the public's drinking water sources.

Hagen requested public response to the Working Forest legislation by April 30, 2003, at which time it was overwhelmingly rejected, as it had been in early 2001, when former NDP Forests Minister Gordon Wilson tabled similar legislation. As the final August 2003 report on the public submissions, *A Working Forest for British Columbia Consultation Report*, states, **"The general public, First Nations, environmental organizations, recreational interests, and some community interests strongly oppose the Working Forest Initiative."**

Since December 1907, legislation under the *Land Act* has prevented further privatization of Public lands in BC. Despite strong and consistent public disapproval, Hagen, with the backing of Campbell's Cabinet, has been determinedly proceeding, thereby making a mockery of democracy and public participation in it.

"This government is out of control", says Will Koop, Coordinator of the Alliance, "particularly these two Ministers, who have knowingly passed this legislation against not only the wishes but the best interests of the public. They appear to be little more than bagmen for the forest industry's \$3 million in contributions to the BC Liberal Party between September 1995 and 2002, and as such they have no business making any more decisions on behalf of the people of British Columbia."