



July 30, 2018

The Honourable John Horgan, M.L.A.
Premier of the Province of British Columbia
and
The Honourable George Heyman
Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

RE: Environmental Assessment Revitalization

Dear Premier and Minister,

The Rivershed Society of BC requests your action in developing a stronger environmental assessment process. We believe that it is important for the health of our watersheds to ensure there are robust laws in place that protect our environment, while also acknowledging cultural and economic values.

Environmental assessments are some of the most important processes in the province, as they provide the information required to make informed decisions on if, when and how industrial activity will proceed, and how environmental values will be protected. We acknowledge the steps the province is taking to improve the process, as outlined in the Environmental Assessment Revitalization Discussion Paper, including honouring the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, improving community engagement, and including regional assessments in the process.

We believe that environmental assessment also requires the following:

- Complete independence during the environmental assessment process where the contracted consultant(s) hired to undertake the assessment and ongoing monitoring works are not paid directly by the proponent.
- Indigenous communities given the resources to be involved in the technical aspects of the assessment, as well as at the political level.
- Address cumulative effects within the region but also within the province, to identify impacts related to a project over entire watersheds, not just individual streams/ivers (e.g., Fraser River watershed encompasses a large portion of the province, and what happens in one community watershed also impacts the Fraser River).
- Address cumulative impacts on water quality and quantity in order to protect the sustainability of healthy and productive ecosystems, and to protect the health of communities downstream.
- Reject outright projects that do not meet important legal criteria, including Indigenous consent (from all Indigenous communities within the territory affected), climate and



species-at-risk regulations. In many instances, it seems that when a project is denied, the proponent has multiple opportunities to revise their plans and resubmit.

- Provide more meaningful public participation and participant funding.

The Rivershed Society of BC stands with many other non-government organizations in requesting that you take strong steps in initiating the new environmental assessment protocols for the protection of our watersheds.

Sincerely,

Fin Donnelly
Chair, RSBC Rivershed Society of British Columbia

And the Board of Directors