

Honourable Rich Coleman, Minister  
Ministry of Forests

December 18, 2005

**Re/ District of Sechelt Probationary Community Forest Agreement Application**

Dear Sir,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Sunshine Coast Conservation Association, which is an umbrella organization of 28 conservation and environmental advocacy groups working within the Sunshine Coast Forest District.

Your statement, during question period at the Legislature on October 26, 2005 (Hansard, line 1239) regarding establishment of Community Forest Licenses clearly indicated that these licenses would not be imposed on communities that do not want them. While we do support the idea of community forests, this particular application does not enjoy our confidence or that of the people of the Sunshine Coast or any of the key stakeholders in the proposal area.

We object to the granting of the District of Sechelt's PCFA, at this time, in the strongest possible terms, for the following reasons;

- The District's pursuit of this license has not involved any meaningful consultation with or genuine disclosure to the affected public or the most important stakeholders,
- The District has repeatedly refused to provide documentation or answers to reasonable questions from affected persons, local governments and citizens organizations,
- Whenever the issue of this license has come before the public, opposition has been clearly overwhelming,
- The Sunshine Coast Regional District has not supported establishment of this license. The regional district is the *purveyor of water* and as such, has significant legal obligations to all the people of the region. Approximately 55% of the proposed community forest land base is *Watershed Reserve* (under *Section 16* of the *Land Act*) and provides 23,000 people with potable water,
- The Sechelt Indian Government has clearly stated that it will not allow logging within the Chapman/Gray community drinking watershed,
- The land base proposed for this license that is outside the Chapman/Gray Watershed Reserves is insufficient to support the license beyond the five-year probationary period. As presently constituted, this application cannot possibly be economically viable.
- The Town of Gibsons has withdrawn its tentative support for this application, pending receipt of further information. To date, no further information has been

provided.

- The District's current application does not recognize its obligations to the Joint Watershed Management Agreement, to which it is a signatory. This document states the agreement of the Sechelt Indian Government and the Sunshine Coast Regional District to manage the drinking watersheds for water, not for industrial values. The significance of this document was brought to your attention in the legislature on November 24, 2005 by Sunshine Coast Powell River MLA Nicholas Simons (Hansard, line 2211).

It appears to many people that the District of Sechelt believes that it already has the support of senior government and does not need to consult with the public, or any other body. We believe that there are solutions that could satisfy the interests of all concerned, and therefore ask that the Ministry support efforts to find them.

Yours truly,

Daniel Bouman, Executive Director  
Sunshine Coast Conservation Association

cc

Doug Konkin, Deputy Minister, MoF  
Tom Christensen, Minister, Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation  
Stan Dixon, Chief Councilor, Sechelt Indian Government  
Nicholas Simons, MLA, Sunshine Coast Powell River  
John Rees, Chair, Sunshine Coast Regional District  
Barry Janyk, Mayor, Town of Gibsons  
Cameron Reid, Mayor, District of Sechelt  
Jeff Battersby, Chair, CFAC  
Board of Directors, BC Community Forest Association