

Subject: Urgent Request for Action
(April 10, 2024)

We write with outrage at the government's disregard for the looming catastrophe of water pollution in British Columbia. The negligence bordering on criminality in addressing the festering manure contamination from Intensive Cattle Operations (ICOs) poses an imminent threat to our lakes, rivers, and aquifers.

The middle Shuswap River, once hailed as "the cleanest river at this latitude," is now in peril as E.Coli levels in a culvert going into the river tested at 2,240. Since E.Coli in drinking water should be no more than 0, and primary contact ≤ 88 , this makes the river water not only undrinkable but potentially unswimmable.

While the Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO) spent considerable funds to safeguard the Shuswap's purity, leviathans like Interior Health and the Ministry of Environment conveniently play the role of the Three Wise Monkeys, as excrement leach in our waterways.

Tragically, this inaction mirrors the ordeal of the Hullcar Aquifer, a cautionary tale writ large of governmental ineptitude and corporate impunity. Years of pleas from the Steele Springs Waterworks District (SSWD) to halt pollution from ICOs fell on deaf ears. Despite irrefutable evidence linking nitrate pollution to specific ICOs, governmental authorities failed to act effectively, advising residents faced with compromised water quality and health risks to purchase water or new water purification systems.

Government's recent allocation of \$3.8 million of our tax dollars to upgrade water infrastructure in Spallumcheen, falls short of addressing the systemic issue of pollution from ICOs. which now carries toxic nutrients into downstream bodies like Deep Creek, Otter Lake, Goose Lake and Okanagan Lake.

The algae blooms in these water bodies are known to be caused by increased nutrients. They are toxic, causing sickness and potentially death in people, livestock, pets and wildlife. The First Nations Health Authority warned area residents not to drink directly from Okanagan Lake, to avoid contact with the affected water and keep animals out of it, underscoring the urgent need for decisive action. (Vernon Morning Star, August 2023).

Yet, BC's regulatory system continues to let polluters profit from environmental devastation. Therefore it falls upon us, the concerned citizens, to demand accountability and action. The headwaters of the Shuswap River must not be allowed to continue being polluted to serve someone's profit motive. Urgent action is a moral imperative. Please take a moment to email elected officials to demand immediate protection of water at source and a complete overhaul of policies that prioritize profit over the preservation of nature and the protection of our health.

Together, we can, we must, compel the authorities to uphold their duty to safeguard our water sources and prevent further degradation.

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