



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

September 20, 2005

The Editor
Abbotsford News

Editor:

In response to Michael Nenn's September 15th letter, I can assure your readers B.C.'s environmental standards are second to none.

Throughout the 1990s, rather than modernize the province's regulations and legislation, the previous NDP government simply added regulation on top of regulation, burying staff and paralyzing business. We all know the result – a decade of decline, where B.C.'s economic growth went from first to worst in Canada.

Our government's approach has been to maintain B.C.'s high environmental standards, but keep the regulations focused on the results. Cut the paperwork and allow staff to spend more time in the field, monitoring and enforcing the law. We are also hiring additional staff to focus on commercial offenders. In addition, over the past six months we've hired more than 30 new people to fill a variety of field positions such as Conservation Officers, Park Rangers and Ground Water Technicians.

I am interested in additional regulatory reform to stop unscrupulous businesses from handling toxic waste before they get started. This policy work is underway now and I have asked for it to be accelerated.

Sincerely,

Barry Penner
Minister of Environment