
LETTER TO THE EDITOR

March 2, 2006

The Editor
Vancouver Sun

Re: Victoria can't wash its hands of the need to gather data about water, Mar. 1

I would like to respond to your editorial about British Columbia's hydrometric network.

The Water Survey of Canada (a branch of Environment Canada) operates the network under a federal-provincial agreement. The B.C. Ministry of Environment and its provincial partners pay about two-thirds of the \$5 million annual cost.

I raised the issue of the potential suspension of operations at some hydrometric stations two weeks ago when I met with Rona Ambrose, the federal Minister of the Environment. During this meeting, the Minister agreed with our concern about protecting the health and safety of British Columbians and provided a commitment to keep all 450 existing hydrometric monitoring stations in operation this year.

This commitment to British Columbians is one of the many benefits of maintaining a strong working relationship between the federal and provincial governments.

The Province has committed to fully fund existing stations for the next year. I will also continue to work with stakeholders – including industry, which benefits significantly from the collection of this data – and Environment Canada to bring long-term certainty to the funding formula, as we keep hydrometric monitoring stations operating in B.C.

Sincerely,

Barry Penner
Minister of Environment