



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

August 24, 2005

The Editor
The Province

Editor:

After reading your editorial about the abandoned forest industry dump site on the Pitt River (Cleaning up industrial waste makes good business sense, Aug. 23), I thought I should provide you with an update on our clean-up efforts.

Shortly after Minister of Forests and Range, Rich Coleman, and I assumed our new portfolios in June, we were briefed about the Pitt River site. To expedite its clean-up, we agreed to share the estimated \$225,000 cost between our ministries.

Government staff have conducted water and soil testing, completed an assessment of the site and developed a plan for its clean-up. Tests showed the site was not introducing toxins into the river system. In addition, the Ministry of Forests and Range removed 200 garbage bags of waste from the site during an initial clean-up.

The B.C. government recently contracted with an environmental engineering firm to develop a detailed plan to deal with the environmental and aesthetic issues at the site. When we're looking at spending upwards of \$200,000 on remediation, we need to make sure we've fully assessed the situation and have a plan in place that will work.

Like the visiting anglers mentioned in your editorial, I am upset about the mess at this site. It's important to note that the clean-up schedule depends on the right water levels and fish windows. We expect to have work underway this fall.

I want to make it clear that as Minister of Environment, I will do my best to protect the province's primary drawing card—its beautiful environment—for tourists and residents alike.

Sincerely,
Barry Penner
Minister of Environment