



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

August 29, 2005

The Editor
The Province

Editor:

I would like to address some points raised in your article about the disposal of treated sewage in Shuswap Lake (Shuswap residents raise stink over sewage plan, Aug. 29).

First, the B.C. government is working with groups in the region to see if we can address their concerns. As recently as Aug. 6, Minister of Health George Abbott and I met with representatives of the Columbia-Shuswap Regional District board. The meeting was an excellent opportunity to discuss wastewater issues resulting from proposed development projects on Shuswap Lake.

It should be noted that the regional district has tools available to it to limit sewage outfalls in Shuswap Lake. The B.C. government will continue to work with the regional district to identify options that will lead to a satisfactory long-term solution.

The most restrictive sewage standards in the province are applied in the British Columbia Interior and through regulations the B.C. government has designated the Shuswap as a particularly sensitive environment requiring additional protection, something all developers are required to follow. And once a sewage treatment facility is running, regular reports must be submitted to the Ministry so that our staff can monitor performance.

Finally, the Ministry of Environment does not decide if local developments go forward – that is the responsibility of local governments. Instead, our role is to try to ensure there are no adverse environmental impacts from the projects and to maintain water quality standards in the lakes and streams of B.C.

Sincerely,
Barry Penner
Minister of Environment