



BRITISH  
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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

August 24, 2005

The Editor  
The Times Colonist

Editor:

When I read your editorial about the abandoned forest industry dumpsite on the Pitt River (Ecology and economy, Aug. 23), I was disappointed to discover that you left out an important detail—we are well on the way to cleaning up the site.

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. The clean-up schedule depends to some degree on waiting for the right water levels and fish windows, but we expect to have work underway this fall.

Finally, I take issue with your characterization of the relative value the B.C. government puts on forestry versus environmental protection. While forestry remains an economic engine of the province, protection of British Columbia's environment is a top priority for this government.

In fact, leading the world in sustainable environmental management is one of our great goals for the next decade.

Sincerely,  
Barry Penner  
Minister of Environment