



Cowichan Watershed Board

September 05, 2015

The Honourable Steve Thompson
Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
P.O. Box 9049
Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W9E2

Dear Minister Thompson:

The Cowichan Watershed Board supports the application by Catalyst Pulp and Paper for a temporary licence to divert water from Cowichan Lake into Cowichan River by means of submersible pumps. The approval of this licence in a timely manner by your Ministry is crucial to maintaining the flow of the Cowichan River during this year's extremely low Lake inflows.

Providing action is taken in a timely manner, we will be able to avoid a catastrophe of near zero flow in the Cowichan River which threatens not only the operation of the Catalyst mill but also important fresh water and anadromous fisheries values as the spawning season is fast approaching.

As you are aware from our previous correspondence and meetings with you, the Watershed Board is comprised of representatives of the following organizations: Canada Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Cowichan Tribes and the Cowichan Valley Regional District. Additionally there are prominent citizens with health, environmental and groundwater concerns on the Board and the BC Ministry of Environment is frequently in attendance.

Thank you for your continuing support and attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Jon Lefebure

Co-Chair, Cowichan Watershed Board

Cc Chief William Seymour, Cowichan Tribes, Duncan, BC.
Larry Barr, Director, Resource Management, Ministry of Forests Lands and Natural Resource Operations,
Nanaimo, BC



Reference: 217772

October 1, 2015

Jon Lefebure, Co-Chair
Cowichan Watershed Board
3961 Riverside Road
Duncan, BC V9L 6N1

Dear Jon Lefebure:

Your letter of September 5, 2015, to Honourable Steve Thomson, Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, regarding support for the use of submersible pumps to augment flows in the Cowichan River, has been referred to me for a response.

Since receiving your letter, Cowichan Lake has recovered to a point that is above the current rule curve, and flows in Cowichan River are considerably higher than those in the summer. As a result, Catalyst Paper has requested their application be amended to instead include the low flow periods in both 2016 and 2017, should a similar drought situation arise. The Water Allocation group of the West Coast Natural Resource Region (the region) will be working with Catalyst Paper and potentially affected parties to arrive at a solution that will allow for adequate flows to be maintained through the next two drought seasons.

In addition, flows in the Cowichan River are currently being managed by the region's Resource Management group. The current goals are to allow for capture of brood stock fishery by reducing releases from the lake. With the reduction in releases from the lake, there is a potential to increase lake levels, which is being balanced on a daily basis against the coming fall weather patterns and landowner concerns with flooding.

Should you have any questions regarding these activities, please contact Darryl Slater, Water Allocation Section Head, by phone at 250 751-3239, or Larry Barr, Director of Resource Management, by phone at 250 751-7105.

Sincerely,

Craig Sutherland
Assistant Deputy Minister
Coast Area

pc: Honourable Steve Thomson, Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural
Resource Operations
Chief William Charles Seymour, Cowichan Tribes First Nation
Darryl Slater, Water Allocation Section Head, West Coast Natural Resource
Region
Larry Barr, Director, Resource Management, West Coast Natural Resource Region