



Cowichan Watershed Board

Nov. 14, 2018

The Honourable Doug Donaldson, M.L.A.
Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
PO Box 9428 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC. V8W 9V1

Dear Honourable Minister Donaldson

It was a pleasure to meet with you last month about the Cowichan River weir and climate change mitigation strategies to protect our salmon runs here. We write today to bring your attention to another matter which we believe could further jeopardize the salmon and other species in our watershed. We understand there are plans to reduce Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development staffing levels here in the Cowichan Valley. As you are no doubt aware, the Cowichan Valley supports a vibrant and engaged stewardship community that are involved in a wide variety of activities that sustain environmental health and protect our watershed. Community engagement and citizen science initiatives supported by the Cowichan Watershed Board and our partners rely on your Ministry to provide a strong enforcement presence to backstop our work and ensure compliance with current regulatory frameworks.

We are therefore very concerned that there may be a plan to move two Natural Resource Officers (NRO's) currently stationed in the Cowichan Valley to Nanaimo. We believe the NROs play a vital role in protecting our forests, rivers and other natural habitats, and the ecosystems they support. Because the nature of their work is often time sensitive and immediate, an additional forty-five minutes to an hour of travel time to an incident site can be critical to their effectiveness in law enforcement. The citizens and communities of the Cowichan Valley greatly value our heritage river and the watershed that supports it. Accordingly, through this letter, we wish to bring this matter to you attention and respectfully request that the proposed move of the Cowichan Valley Natural Resource Officers be reconsidered.

Thank you for your time and interest.

Chief William Seymour
Co-Chair Cowichan Watershed Board
Chief, Cowichan Tribes

Chair Ian Morrison
Co-Chair Cowichan Watershed Board
Chair, Cowichan Valley Regional District

About the Cowichan Watershed Board:

The Cowichan Watershed Board is a local governance model created in 2010 to provide leadership for sustainable water management in the Cowichan/Koksilah watersheds, ancestral home of the Quw'utsun First Nation. The CWB is co-chaired by Cowichan Tribes and the Cowichan Valley Regional District and represents a unique partnership between First Nations and local government. Through this model, Cowichan Tribes and the CVRD work together to advance whole-of-watershed health, demonstrating a commitment to moving down the path of reconciliation.