



BC Potato &
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Growers' Association

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November 8, 2013

Kathy Eichenberger
Executive Director
Columbia River Treaty Review Team
BC Ministry of Energy and Mines
PO Box 9314, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9N1

Dear Ms. Eichenberger:

Columbia River Treaty Review – Draft BC Recommendation

The BC Fruit Growers' Association and the BC Potato and Vegetable Growers' Association support the province's draft negotiating position issued in October 16, 2013. The BC Ministry of Energy and Mines has signalled that Canada-BC will continue the Columbia River Treaty and seek improvements within the existing Treaty framework.

In addition, the draft recommendation sets out 14 principles, with two principles especially important to the tree fruit, vegetable and potato sectors in BC.

Principle 2 notes “The level of benefits to the Province, which is currently primarily in the form of the Canadian Entitlement [the equivalent value of hydro power generated in the US from one-half of the water stored in Canadian reservoirs], does not account for the full range of benefits in the United States or the impacts in British Columbia.”

Principle 3 goes further to state “All downstream U.S. benefits ... should be accounted for and such value created shared equitably between the two countries.”

The recognition that the benefits from BC water storage extend beyond hydro power generation and flood control is important to the BC potato, vegetable and tree fruit sectors. Together, our associations represent commercial tree fruit, potato and vegetable growers in BC, with a farm gate value of \$179.0 million in 2012.

BC potato, vegetable, and tree fruit growers understand the impact of BC reservoir flows provided to US growers in the July-September growing season. Together, our associations initiated CRT studies in the early 1990's and in the past two years we have presented information to the BC Minister of Agriculture and staff of the BC Ministry of Energy and Mines, as well as submitted information to the public review process. Attached is our submission.

With regard to the Draft BC Recommendation, we have one suggestion: that the term “water supply” in Principle 3 be more definitive by specifying the relevant types of consumptive water supply as “irrigation, residential and industrial water supply”.

Identification of irrigation is needed because of:

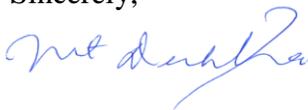
- Huge, new US irrigation projects that will be dependent on assured July-September flows in the Columbia River;
- A proposal to replenish a depleted underground aquifer for irrigation purposes;
- The impact of climate change: a reduction in natural July-September water flows and increased evapotranspiration in July-September period; and,
- The impact of increased ecological flows demanded in the US for fisheries, diverting existing water flows away from US irrigation supply.

Water flows in the July-September period will be further impacted by the new US storage limitations inherent in the Treaty change to “called upon” requests to store potential flood waters in Canadian reservoirs. Irrigation has been identified by the US as a priority in the review of the CRT. Therefore, irrigation should be specifically identified in Principle 3 of the Draft BC Recommendation.

We plan to write to the Minister of Energy and Mines to request a meeting to discuss the importance of the CRT to US tree fruit, potato and vegetable production and the subsequent impact on BC producers. We have already presented Columbia River Treaty information to local MLAs. We have requested meetings with the Premier and the new Minister of Agriculture to provide them with updates on the Columbia River Treaty, from the potato, vegetable and tree fruit perspective.

In conclusion, our associations support the October 16, 2013 Draft BC Recommendation on the Columbia River Treaty Review.

Sincerely,



Jeet Dukhia
President
BC Fruit Growers' Association

Original signed by

Bill Zylmans
President
BC Potato and Vegetable Association

cc

Premier Christy Clark
Hon. Pat Pimm