

BC ENVIRONMENT BRIEFING NOTE

PREPARED FOR: Minister of Environment
DATE: March 12, 1991
ISSUE: Water Export from British Columbia
BACKGROUND:

- Snowcap Waters Ltd. is demanding that a water licence be issued by Thursday, March 14 for export of 15,000 acre feet per year from Tzela Creek in Toba Inlet. This is requested to qualify to bid for supply to Goleta Water District.

OPTIONS:

- **Complete the current process.**

B.C. Environment must decide that the proposed water export does not impact undesirably upon environmental resource values.

An undertaking has been made to the Klahoose Indian Band that a three-day notice would be given between the environmental decision announcement and initiation of the water licence decision process.

Department of Fisheries and Oceans has initiated a screening under the EARP guidelines order. Agencies have been requested to respond by March 22, 1991. Their decision about the environmental impacts should follow shortly. The Comptroller of Water Rights would then consider the water licence application.

- **Expedite the current process.**

B.C. Environment must decide that the proposed water export does not impact undesirably upon environmental resource values.

The Comptroller of Water Rights would then consider the water licence application and attempt to complete the process to meet Snowcap's March 14 deadline.

Commitments to the Klahoose Band would not be honoured and uncertainty would continue about the outcome of the federal EARP process.

- **Place a Moratorium on the issuance of new licences for water export.**

The Lieutenant Governor in Council could reserve, under Section 44 of the Water Act, all unrecorded water in the province in the name of the Crown, and provide that all water so reserved may be acquired for all purposes except the industrial purpose of commercial bulk export by marine tanker. This reserve to have a fixed time period of one year.

Use the comprehensive Water Management discussion paper, "Sustaining the Water Resource", to seek public input on a wide range of water management issues in British Columbia, including water export, during the time of the moratorium.

RECOMMENDED POSITION:

- Place a moratorium and initiate public discussion of the water export policy.

CAUTIONARY NOTES:

- Correspondence with the Klahoose Band during the Province's examination of environmental impacts has promised them an opportunity to present their concerns. The Band has asked for more time to prepare its comments.
- Snowcap has promised legal action if the licence is not granted in accordance with established procedure.

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APPROVED:

D.M. _____ DATE: _____

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