

Polak, Mary ENV:EX

From: Polak, Mary ENV:EX
Sent: Thursday, October 8, 2015 5:21 PM
To: Tegart, Jackie
Subject: Re: Good job!

You too! Well deserved :)

Sent from my iPad

> On Oct 8, 2015, at 7:14 PM, "Tegart, Jackie" <J.Tegart@leg.bc.ca> wrote:

>

> Thank you so much Mary.

>

> Have a great Thanksgiving!

>

> Jackie

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Polak, Mary ENV:EX [<mailto:Mary.Polak@gov.bc.ca>]

> Sent: Thursday, October 08, 2015 4:41 PM

> To: Tegart, Jackie <J.Tegart@leg.bc.ca>

> Subject: Good job!

>

> Great interview with Harrison!

>

> Sent from my iPad

>



Reference: 283658

July 7, 2015

s.22

Thank you for your letter of April 1, 2015, addressed to Ms. Jackie Tegart, M.L.A. for Fraser Nicola, regarding the *Water Sustainability Act* and the pricing of groundwater in British Columbia (BC). As your enquiry falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment, I am pleased to respond on behalf of my colleague and I apologize for the delay in doing so.

The *Water Sustainability Act* (the new Act) received Royal Assent on May 29, 2014, and will be brought into force in 2016. The new Act will update and replace the existing *Water Act* and contains measures to protect stream health, regulate groundwater, address water use during times of scarcity and expand opportunities to participate in decision-making processes.

To implement the new Act, government introduced a new fee and rental schedule on February 5, 2015. The schedule is the result of a comprehensive review of water pricing that was initiated last year with the release of government's water pricing discussion paper. Through our public consultation process, which began in 2009 and is among the most thorough consultations government has ever undertaken, British Columbians were very clear that they did not want government treating an essential resource as a commodity. The fees we are charging are intended to only cover the costs of administering the new legislation.

Government acknowledges the public's concerns associated with the use of groundwater for commercial purposes such as water bottling. For the first time, non-domestic groundwater users throughout British Columbia will be regulated. Beginning in 2016, industrial, agricultural and other non-domestic users will require a license and be subject to fees and rentals. They will also have the same responsibilities as those who currently obtain their water from surface sources. More information on the *Water Sustainability Act* is available on our website at <http://engage.gov.bc.ca/watersustainabilityact/>.

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In response to your comments regarding the Province's stance on compliance and enforcement, the Ministry of Environment takes its responsibility for protecting human health and the environment very seriously. Permit conditions are legally binding and ministry staff monitor proponents to ensure they meet these conditions. If permit-holders—like Mount Polley Mining Corporation—are found to be out of compliance or an incident occurs, the ministry takes action to ensure compliance is achieved and any impacts to the environment are mitigated.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary Polak".

Mary Polak
Minister

cc: Jackie Tegart, MLA, Fraser – Nicola