

B. C. TAP WATER ALLIANCE

**Caring for, Monitoring, and Protecting
British Columbia's Community Water
Supply Sources**

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The B.C. Tap Water Alliance and the Society Promoting
Environmental Conservation (SPEC) Press Release

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BC GOVERNMENT IN CONFLICT OF INTEREST OVER ERICKSON CHLORINATION

Vancouver - The B.C. Government and Galloway Lumber Co. Ltd., a forest company that stands to benefit from logging in the watershed supplying drinking water to Erickson, are funding experiments into the feasibility of logging BC community watersheds.

“We believe that the BC Government is in a conflict of interest in imposing an order to chlorinate the Erickson water supply, while at the same time funding research into logging of the Erickson and other community watersheds,” said Will Koop a SPEC researcher and head of the B.C. Tap Water Alliance. Koop is coordinating a SPEC campaign to protect B.C. community watersheds. “With a decreasing supply of easily harvested timber, companies are pressuring to get access to previously reserved community watersheds. Logging and associated road building removes forest cover, damages soils, destroys stream channels; practices which damage water quality and necessitate drastic treatments such as chlorination.”

Dr. Azit Mazumder, who chairs Canada's only research department on drinking water, at the University of Victoria, is working on new water quality guidelines for logging in BC drinking water sources. In a January 16, 2001 CBC Radio story about the debate over logging and chlorination of Erickson's and Creston's water supply in the Arrow Creek Watershed, Mazumder admitted “our intention is to find out how forest industries can actually harvest forests without affecting water quality.” Residents of Erickson and the region have been opposed to logging of their watershed for at least 60 years. They claimed that by leaving the forest cover intact, and limiting human access, chlorination of their water supply was unnecessary.

At the announcement of UVic's drinking water study in October, 1999, \$2.5 million in funding came from sources including Galloway Lumber Co Ltd., Cranbrook's Crestbrook Forest Industries (TEMBEC), the B.C. Ministry of Environment, and Forest Renewal B.C.'s Kootenay Region.

“The connection between Galloway Lumber Co. benefiting from logging in the Erickson watershed and Mazumder's experiments appears to seriously compromise the objectivity and value of his work,” said Koop. “Crestbrook Forest Industries, one of his funders, was responsible for damaging Creston's

Sullivan Creek drinking water source over 20 years ago. There's already been enough destruction from logging in B.C. community watersheds. If Mazumder wants to experiment in alternative forestry, he shouldn't do it in watersheds that provide people with their drinking water."

A December, 2000 Creston Valley Forest Corporation (CVFC) report, states that "direct sales to Wyndell (Box and Lumber) and Galloway (Lumber Co. Ltd.) will continue through to the new year." CVFC is preparing to log the pristine 7900 hectare Arrow Creek Erickson Watershed and is asking the BC Government for a 99-year logging license.

"B.C. Municipal Affairs Minister Jim Doyle, previously Minister of Forests, began negotiating a reduction in stumpage fees for CVFC last October. Health Minister Corky Evans is a staunch advocate of logging in drinking watersheds in the Slocan Valley," said Koop. "On Jan 12 Doyle and Evans forced the Erickson Improvement District into receivership when local residents refused to allow chlorination in their up-to-now unlogged watershed. On January 15 Evans claimed CVFC can "produce both wood and good water from the same land."

In a January 15 article in the Creston Valley Advance, now CVFC manager of operations Jim Smith said, "there is no connection between the logging practices of the CVFC and the Erickson chlorination issue." In 1976 Smith and fellow Creston Valley residents opposed logging the Erickson Watershed.

"We believe there is a connection between the order to chlorinate Erickson's water and logging in the watershed. Six months after the BC Government gave a license allowing CVFC to log the Erickson Watershed in June 1997, the Health Ministry most likely ordered the Erickson Improvement District to chlorinate because of the negative impact of logging on water quality," said Koop.

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