

**MEDIA RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
May 5, 1998**

Sunshine Coast water users reject government resource plan - "Safe Water Week" message heard loud and clear in referendum.

In the first referendum of its kind in B.C. history, Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) voters overwhelmingly rejected a B.C. government plan for future industry in two community watersheds. With 87.6% opposed, the May 2 vote confirms the residents' commitment to protecting Chapman and Gray Creeks from further degradation.

After 30 years of logging in the Chapman creek watershed, and over 300 landslides into the SCRD water supply, residents are making a statement which is loud and clear. The government plan proposed continued logging and the introduction of mining as part of an integrated resource management program. The two watersheds supply about 18,000 residents with their drinking water.

This dramatic expression of concern for healthy domestic water supplies coincides with the launch of the "Safe Drinking Water Week." Water users all over British Columbia are marking the week of May 3-9 to celebrate safe, clean water, an essential ingredient of life. The referendum vote is seen as a clear message of support to the residents of Greater Vancouver, Victoria and the Slocan Valley, who are continuing their attempts to defend community watersheds from inappropriate development. British Columbians know clean water is critical to their health and better quality water can be assured through local control.

The Sunshine Coast plan would have seen the Ministry of Forests' continue to have control and to permit industrial activities in the SCRD's watersheds. With the legal and financial responsibility for providing clean potable water, the SCRD would have borne the long terms costs associated with the degradation of its water quality, with only an advisory role in resource operations in its own watersheds. This is the state of affairs in almost all community watersheds in British Columbia.