

-----Original Message-----

From: Chuck Lee [mailto:chucklee@toughcountry.net]

Sent: March 16, 2009 4:56 PM

To: 'Dhaliwal, Sukh - M.P.'

Cc: John Edwards - CKC; althea@telusplanet.net

Subject: RE: Navigable Waters Protection Act

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your response to my letter written in regards to the Navigable Waters Protection Act. I appreciate that all political parties were caught in a difficult political position, however I remain unconvinced that there were not options to split out the NWPA amendments and other non-budget legislation from Bill C-10.

While it may be true that the Canadian Environmental Protection Act and other Provincial Environmental Acts will work to protect our waters into the future, I wrote to you and the other members of Parliament because the amendments to the NWPA take away the personal safeguards that I and other Canadians enjoy when we navigate our waterways. What is of critical bearing is that my personal safety and that of your grandchildren is now being put at peril when landowners, industry, municipalities or governments are building projects on, in, under or over our rivers in this country.

How many Canadians will be endangered or even lose their lives when they are trapped in barb wire fences strung across our rivers, capsized under low head bridges, trapped in recirculating holes caused by underwater pipelines or water diversion weirs, clotheslined by low hanging cables or sucked into culverts under a road? These "accidents" happen every year and will be more prevalent in the future when most of our waterways will not have any protection from unregulated development.

In spite of the fact that the law was written over a century ago to protect commercial navigation interests, it is no less important today in protecting Canadian's recreational navigation interests. As a comparison, the safe design of our roads and highways is as important for personal vehicles driven for pleasure as it is for our commercial vehicles. Would you suggest that the roads that you and your family drive for personal use should have the lower degree of safety that our rivers will now have with unregulated development allowed in or on your roads? Should commercial interests dictate the level of safety on Canada's road networks for overpass bridges, underground and above ground utilities or fencing? I believe that this is a fair comparison. The NWPA was the only buttress that was in place in Canada to ensure that our riverways remained safe when manmade obstructions were built. The safety of Canadians to enjoy their right to paddle, sail, row, motor or just float down their local waterways will now be in severe jeopardy.

Once our Canadian rights are lost or diminished by Parliament it will be difficult if not impossible to regain them. The fact that there was no broad based public debate or hearings on the NWPA and that only industry and government agencies were invited to participate gives me cause to consider that I do not live in a real democratic society. I remain deeply disturbed that there was no effective response by our elected and non-elected representatives to address this legislative change in spite of the thousands of letters sent to you and the other members of Parliament and the Senate.

I trust that you will consider the safety and rights of your grandchildren when you consider how you will respond to the passage of this legislation.

Sincerely Yours,

Chuck Lee
Box 162,
Lundbreck, AB, T0K 1H0
403-628-2336

From: Dhaliwal, Sukh - M.P. [mailto:DhaliS@parl.gc.ca]
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2009 7:48 AM
To: 'chucklee@toughcountry.net'
Subject: Navigable Waters Protection Act

Thank you for sharing your views regarding the impact of Bill C-10, the Conservative government's budget implementation bill, on Canada's Navigable Waters Protection Act.

Since last fall, the Liberal Party's priority has been providing economic stimulus to the economy. Sadly it took the Conservative government months to put together a stimulus package, during which time hundreds of thousands of Canadians have lost their jobs. In January alone a Canadian job disappeared nearly every 20 seconds. Countering these job losses is the reason we've decided to support this budget, which provides urgently needed stimulus spending.

As you are aware, there are a number of measures in C-10 with which the Liberal Opposition is not satisfied. We would have preferred that measures concerning our navigable waters had been tabled in a separate piece of legislation. Unfortunately, the government has deliberately placed these in the budget bill, making them matters of confidence. This means that any changes to the bill would result in an election that would delay stimulus measures for months to come. With thousands of Canadians losing their jobs every day, the Liberal Opposition has determined that the best thing to do for this country is to get that money working in our economy, even if that means passing some measures which we would not otherwise support.

As you can imagine, this was not an easy decision for me and my colleagues. We remain confident that the Canadian Environmental Protection Act will ensure that projects do not cause significant adverse environmental effects. The environment remains a central concern of our Party. As our leader, Michael Ignatieff, has said, the Conservative government is on probation – and protecting our environment is part of that probation.

I trust this helps to you to understand how we came to this view. Please do not hesitate to contact me again on this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sukh Dhaliwal', with a horizontal line underneath.

Sukh Dhaliwal, MP
Newton-North Delta