



Whitewater Kayaking Association of British Columbia

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Mr. Bill Freeman

Dear Mr. Freeman:

Further to your letter to Mr. John Duncan, of November 6, your phone call to Mr. Stuart Smith (November 12, 2002) and to the WKABC's e-mail letter to Mr. John Ritchie (November 7, 2002), we are writing to clarify the concerns which were put forth in the WKABC's letter to Mr. John Ritchie.

At a meeting of local paddlers in Castlegar, on November 1, 2002, the concerns which previously were brought forth to the WKABC by local paddlers were discussed at length, and clarified to include the following items, which were the same ones put forth in the previous WKABC letter to Acres International;

- a) changes to the flow velocity below the dam
- b) changes to the current vectors below the dam
- c) changes to the entire rapid system below the dam
- d) lack of information regarding the exact proposal
- e) lack of clear discussions, and miscommunications

While the WKABC has been informed that some hydrological studies of the area below the Brilliant Dam have been conducted as part of your ongoing work on this project, there are clear concerns regarding the impact that the proposed diversion tunnel, and generation expansion, will have on the river features below the dam – this is not limited to the Brilliant Hole. The rapids below the dam have been utilized for National Freestyle Team Selections, and these features are as much a part of the area utilized by paddlers as the Brilliant Hole, or the other features (which include rapids). Based on the air photo faxed to the WKABC by John Ritchie, on October 17, 2002, the tailrace structure, and outflow will be built exactly where the upper rapid is, and the structure itself, and the changed outflow conditions will certainly impact those features.

In a telephone conversation with Steve McNaughton, of the Environmental Assessment Office on September 4, 2002, the WKABC was informed that the project proponents had just received the information back from various contractors, and had finalized the design proposal – which was different than that put forth originally. The WKABC was informed that the paddling community, and others who wished to have input, would have the opportunity to do so – as the original design was significantly different than the final planned design. In a telephone conversation with John Ritchie, on October 16, the location of one of the key features that paddlers were concerned about (the Brilliant Hole) was discussed. At that time it seemed apparent that the location of the feature in question was in doubt. This was made that much clearer, when John Ritchie faxed the original letter (to Gerry Harmon and Kevin Saldern on April 17, 2001) to the WKABC River Projects Coordinator, on October 17, 2002. The location identified on the map is not the location of the Brilliant Hole. The WKABC has attempted to make this clear to both Mr. Ritchie, and to you, on a couple of different occasions.

The paddling community, be they local paddlers, those in southern British Columbia, or those that regularly travel from Alberta, or the United States to paddle on the world-class play features found on the Kootenay River below the Brilliant Dam, are all concerned regarding the lack of substantial information regarding the proposed upgrades. In addition to overall concerns, the paddlers in the Castlegar area were informed that there would be public meetings held to address these issues. Based on the information provided by numerous local residents, these meetings did not occur, and there have been no meetings to address the issues associated with the new design proposal.

Since the design which is currently proposed is significantly different than the original proposal, it seems unlikely that any hydrological opinion available in April of 2001 will address the concerns above. This is particularly so as the location of the features of concern (the upper rapids and the Brilliant Hole) are certainly not known accurately by the proponents of this project. Any reassurances, which are based on misinformation, do not provide any real confidence to the paddling community, regarding their concerns.

While assurances that the hydrological conditions below the dam will not change, may, on the surface of these issues, address the concerns put forth by the local paddlers involved, to the Borderline Boaters Kayak Club, to the WKABC, and to the concerned paddlers from Western Canada, and the United States, whom all travel to paddle in the area below the Brilliant Dam, the concerns expressed above have not been recognized or addressed to date.

As of November 7, 2002, the WKABC was directed by John Ritchie to contact you, Mr. Freeman, to discuss these matters. During the telephone conversation with you on November 12, the River Projects Coordinator for the WKABC, Mr. Stuart Smith did not receive any answers as to the outstanding questions regarding the hydrological conditions below the dam. It is not a reasonable suggestion that the WKABC or the concerned paddlers should hire a hydrological engineer to prove the concerns that they have are in fact demonstrable by an engineer. As concerned users of the area below the Brilliant Dam, the paddling community is expressing its concerns regarding your projects impacts, and the lack of information that is available as to the design, and the changes to the flow conditions which are expected. Reassurances regarding the overall volume of water that will pass through the generating facilities, or over any spillways, while offering assurances as to general water levels, do not address the concerns expressed above.

Again, the WKABC, the Borderline Boaters, and all the paddlers whom have put forth concerns would like to thank you for the offer to work with the paddling community to improve access to the site (as expressed in the letter from Acres International to Gerry Harmon and Kevin Saldern on April 17, 2001). This offer is an example of how the paddling community would like to work cooperatively to have the concerns that they have addressed, as it is only through identification of concerns, and finding constructive resolutions that offer solutions which work for all involved, that these issues can be addressed effectively. In order to do so, it is important that the developers recognize that there are concerns, and recognizes exactly what those concerns are. Further, both the concerned parties, and the proponents, must recognize, and understand the projects impacts, and expected changes as a result of the project.

The local paddling community, the Borderline Boaters Kayak Club, the WKABC, and all the paddlers whom have enjoyed the thrill and excitement of the features found below the Brilliant Dam, are collectively asking that you meet with the paddling community to address these concerns, and to look to achieving solutions that offer reduced impacts to the areas in question. The paddling community does not wish to hold up your project, cause undue stress, or to present any unreasonable concerns – they only wish to have you recognize their concerns, and work toward some constructive solutions. As part of a larger-scale community development plan, maintaining and increasing recreational opportunities in the area in question are goals that everyone involved would like to see achieved. We look forward to working toward a constructive and positive resolution to the issues that are addressed in this letter.

Sincerely

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