



File 97250-20/19037

October 10, 2019

VIA EMAIL

RE: Complaint #19037 – Bastion Creek Community Watershed

Dear Participants:

In late April 2019, the Totem Pole Resort strata association and Shuswap Environmental Action Society (the complainants) filed a complaint concerning access to a hydrological assessment (the assessment) prepared for the Bastion Creek community watershed. The assessment was commissioned jointly by BC Timber Sales (BCTS) and Canoe Forest Products, as part of their planning for future timber harvesting.

Totem Pole Resort is located on Shuswap Lake, and is a strata corporation that holds a water licence to Bastion Creek, and owners are concerned that proposed forestry operations might impact their water quality. Representatives of the strata corporation indicated that they do not want any harvesting to occur in the watershed.

After the strata corporation received a referral letter from BCTS, the complainants asked to be emailed a copy of the assessment. BCTS denied the request saying that it does not typically share reports electronically. Instead, BCTS offered to review the report with the complainants at the BCTS office in Vernon, or the Canoe Forest Products office near Salmon Arm. That did not satisfy the complainants so they filed a freedom of information request to obtain the assessment.

On June 14, 2019, government delivered a partially redacted copy of the hydrological assessment to the complainants in response to the freedom of information request. When the complainants had not received the assessment by June 4 – the deadline for review and comment stated in the referral letter sent by BCTS – the complainants requested a two-month extension to August 7. BCTS agreed to this extension and ultimately agreed to a second extension to September 25. The complainants informed investigators that they have reviewed the assessment and provided comments to BCTS.

Recently, the Board recommended to government that it amend FRPA to require professional reports that are prepared to comply with an approved forest stewardship strategy be made available to the public.ⁱ In the interim, given that the complainants have been provided a copy

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of the assessment and BCTS has granted an extension for review and comment, the Board considers the issue of access to the assessment to be resolved and is closing its file on this complaint.

The Board is hopeful that the parties can resolve the forest and water management concerns through continued dialogue. If the concerns are not resolved through that effort, the complainants may approach the Board again.

Yours sincerely,



Kevin Kriese, Chair
Forest Practices Board

ⁱ Forest Practices Board, August 15, 2019. Letter to Doug Donaldson, Minister of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development regarding priorities for strengthening the Forest and Range Practices Act. <https://www.bcfpb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Letter-to-Minister-Donaldson-on-FRPA-changes.pdf>