



Reference: 403220

August 28, 2023

Chris Dorrington, Director
Department of Environmental Quality
State of Montana
Sent via email: cdorrington2@mt.gov

Dear Chris Dorrington:

I am writing to inform you that the Province of British Columbia (the Province) recently wrote a letter to the Government of Canada, outlining our proposals for the agreement-in-principle *'to reduce and mitigate the impacts of water pollution in the Elk-Kootenay/ai watershed in partnership with Tribal Nations and Indigenous Peoples'* as committed to by Prime Minister Trudeau and President Biden in March 2023.

The Province has consistently held the position that any path forward must include transparent, ongoing and consistent involvement and collaboration between federal, Indigenous and sub-national governments on both sides of the international border. Equally, we have maintained our view that any transboundary process must respect regulatory authority, not be duplicative of existing efforts, and must add additional value to the ongoing work.

In recent conversations between the Province and the International Joint Commission (IJC), the Commissioners outlined their unique capacity as an internationally recognized, independent, neutral party to convene a forum that would ensure trust is built and maintained in our work in the watershed, and that would build upon long-standing efforts by the Province and other parties. The Province recognizes the importance of moving forward in a way that is respectful and inclusive of Indigenous knowledge and epistemologies, which the IJC process could support.

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Accordingly, our proposal includes a role for the IJC to act as a neutral third party with key skills in convening diverse groups and advancing B.C.'s long standing desire for a governance forum in the watershed. They could assist in bringing representatives together to share progress of efforts, validate information and issues, and create a mechanism for information sharing regarding science, data and monitoring in the Elk-Kootenay/ai watershed.

B.C.'s proposal, creates a new role for the IJC based on the unique circumstances in Elk-Kootenay watershed and our support for IJC involvement is contingent on the proposal being supported by the Prime Minister and President.

We look forward to a Canada-U.S. agreement-in-principle that recognizes B.C.'s ongoing efforts to improve water quality in the Elk Kootenay/ai watershed and Kooacanusa Reservoir, including regulatory actions and other projects underway.

Please reach out to me directly if you would like to discuss further.

With best regards,



Kevin Jardine
Deputy Minister