

Rafe Mair

STOLEN RIVERS

Our Watershed Election



In this Watershed Election on May 12, 2009, we choose between saving our fish and wildlife, our majestic forests that help fight climate change and give us our clean air, or destroying them with private river power projects WE DON'T NEED! We must fight, and must fight to drive the predators out of this Province!

This is British Columbia, where I've spent my whole life. I don't own this land. I use it in trust, for indigenous peoples' title and rights, for the salmon and the bears, for the eagles and the orca, for my community and for all who come after me.

At Save Our Rivers Society we're calling May 12th, 2009, Our Watershed Election, because that's when British Columbians will choose their destiny. This is the most important provincial election we've ever faced, where we decide whether we preserve our sacred rivers and historic public power system, or mandate Gordon Campbell to continue giving them away to some of the world's biggest corporations.

For the past six years our autocratic Premier has been quietly surrendering our watersheds to private companies to make expensive, environmentally destructive power, whose enormous costs will be passed on to us through huge rate increases while ultimately bankrupting BC Hydro. Over six

hundred rivers and streams already have applications or licenses on them. Though invaluable, these licenses cost the companies virtually nothing.

In this Watershed Election, we choose between saving our fish and wildlife, our majestic forests that help fight climate change and give us our clean air, or destroying them with private river power projects we don't need.

Do we follow the far right wing Fraser Institute, who Premier Campbell worships, that says everything must be privatized, including our public assets and the most beautiful landscapes on earth? Or, do we preserve our heritage and fight to keep our rivers, their ecologies, our public power, and our sovereignty?

Thanks to many sacrifices over the past fifty years, we enjoy a public power system and energy security that are the envy of the world, providing us with the lowest power bills and cleanest electricity in North America, while yielding up to a billion dollars a year in public profits, keeping our taxes low while pay-

ing for health care and education. All of that will be lost if we give Campbell and his private energy agenda another four years.

This is Our Watershed Election, where we must take back our environment and our power, together, united across our multi-cultural communities. The damage Campbell's private power policy would do to our economy is incalculable, the damage to our environment would be irreparable.

Either we reclaim our Province on May 12th, 2009, or we abandon our very soul, our heritage, our British Columbia. Join us in the battle to save our rivers and our public power.

To learn more, go to SaveOurRivers.ca. For Save Our Rivers Society, I'm Rafe Mair.

Rafe Mair, Canada's best known political commentator, former lawyer and cabinet minister speaks for Save Our Rivers Society in a video documentary "BC's Watershed Election". For this and more videos on the theft of BC's rivers and public power resources visit www.ourrivers.ca and click on one of the side banners to see the film.

The following text was excerpted from Rafe Mair's speech at Pitt Meadows High on March 25, 2008 during the fight to save the Pitt River.

This is not a shame, this is a bloody crime that is being proposed. I want to tell you that we're in for a long, long

hard fight. Not just here [the Pitt River] but around the Province. As many of you who have heard me in the past know, I'm a fan of Winston Churchill, who knew something about battles. And he said, Never Give In – never, never – in nothing great or small, large or petty. Never give in. Never yield to force. Never yield to the apparently overwhelming might of the enemy. We must fight, and must fight to drive the predators out of this Province.

Now, don't let them complicate this issue. It's a very simple one. These rivers and streams, the Pitt and the 500 or 700 other than that, they belong to us. Not Gordon Campbell. They do not belong to Gordon Campbell and his favorite beneficiaries. Our rivers and streams belong to all of us, on behalf of all of us and behalf of our children and grandchildren. They cannot be allowed to be sold to a morally bankrupt group of companies and a morally bankrupt government.

This, ladies and gentlemen, is a political issue. Make no doubt about that. But it is not a party political issue. This is how it has got to be fought. In the election that is coming up, mercifully in May of 2009, we have to all say around this Province, we will support no candidate for office that doesn't declare his or her solemn promise to protect our rivers and streams and the fish and wildlife they sustain. And, we must say to each and every one of them, we will support no candidate who won't pledge unequivocally for public power.