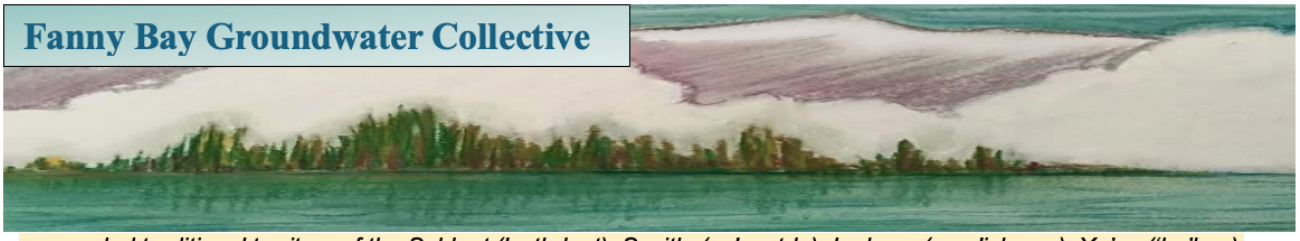
Fanny Bay Groundwater Collective



…unceded traditional territory of the Sahloot ('sath-loot), Sasitla (sa'seet-la), Ieeksun (eye-'ick-sun), Xa'xe ('ha'hey) and Pentlatch peoples, who together, make up the K'omoks Nation…

October 12, 2026

Coree Tull
Chair, BC Watershed Security Coalition

Subject: Fanny Bay groundwater protection — a provincial issue that deserves attention

Dear Coree,

Firsst of all, good work on Global this morning! Excellent summary of the public policy issues…

I am reaching out on behalf of the Fanny Bay Groundwater Collective, a grassroots community organization formed in 2025 to protect our increasingly vulnerable groundwater resources on Vancouver Island.

I have been following the work of the BC Watershed Security Coalition and seems to me that the battle we are fighting here in Fanny Bay goes directly to the heart of the issues your Coalition is working so hard to bring to provincial attention.

Our concern is straightforward: Who gets to make decisions about the future of our groundwater, on what evidence, and in whose interests?

For several consecutive summers, wells that have reliably supplied Fanny Bay families for generations have been running dry. At the same time, two commercial groundwater users — Natural Glacial Waters, which bottles water for domestic and export markets, and Cermaq, which operates an Atlantic Salmon hatchery — have applications before the Province for groundwater licences.

According to information provided by the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship, Natural Glacial Waters alone has applied for the right to extract 1,892,160 cubic metres of groundwater annually — more than five million litres per day.

Of particular concern is the duration of those rights. **If issued, these groundwater licences would exist in perpetuity, registered as appurtenances on title with no expiry date.** Although the Province retains statutory powers to review, amend or cancel licences, there would be no automatic expiry requiring a fresh allocation decision. That makes rigorous scrutiny before approval especially important.

Our community is deeply concerned about the long-term consequences of granting substantial, enduring groundwater rights without adequate public scrutiny, a clear understanding of cumulative impacts on our aquifers, and meaningful opportunities for local communities and First Nations to participate in decisions affecting this essential resource.

Our immediate objective is to secure a two- to three-year pause in the licensing process, allowing time for proper scientific investigation, impact assessment, public engagement and consideration of the protections available under BC's Water Sustainability Act.

Our longer-term objective is the development of a **Water Sustainability Plan** that can provide a durable framework for protecting and governing our groundwater resources.

We have received financial support from West Coast Environmental Law's Environmental Dispute Resolution Fund to help pursue these objectives and are now raising matching funds locally. Our Brochure is attached.

But our concern extends well beyond Fanny Bay.

What we are confronting illustrates a fundamental question for British Columbia: **Can our province genuinely claim to be protecting its groundwater if commercial extraction rights are established before communities have the information, governance mechanisms and opportunity to evaluate the impact of such takings to ensure withdrawals are sustainable?**

Groundwater is too often invisible in public discussions of watershed protection. Yet aquifers sustain our homes, farms, streams, ecosystems and communities. Climate change makes their protection increasingly urgent.

I believe our experience could provide a valuable, concrete example of why the Coalition's calls for full implementation of the Water Sustainability Act, improved water monitoring and stronger local watershed governance are so important.

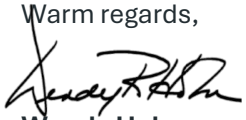
I would very much welcome an opportunity to discuss how our efforts might complement the Coalition's provincial advocacy. In particular, we would appreciate your advice and support in raising the profile of groundwater licensing, strengthening community participation, and encouraging the Province to use the planning and protective tools already available under its legislation.

We are also holding a community groundwater protection event in Fanny Bay on October 24, featuring CBC science broadcaster Bob McDonald and groundwater specialist Dr. Mike Wei, together with a community silent auction to support our legal work. It would be wonderful to connect with you around this event. See material attached.

Our guiding principle is simple: **Groundwater is a public resource, and its management must serve the long-term public interest.**

I suspect we have much in common, and so just wanted to bring you up to date on our work. Would very much welcome a conversation.

Warm regards,



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