

Michelle Mungall, MLA
(Nelson-Creston)
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4



**Province of
British Columbia**
Legislative Assembly



Michelle Mungall, MLA
(Nelson-Creston)

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October 18, 2011

Hon. Rich Coleman
Minister of Energy and Mines
Room 128
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC
V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Coleman,

I write to ask that the direction to BC Hydro to close the Columbia Basin Fish & Wildlife Compensation Program (FWCP) be immediately rescinded. The lay-off notices given to the FWCP staff at the Nelson office will impact our region immensely. The impacts include not just the loss of six jobs in Nelson and one in Cranbrook, but the loss of expertise in fish and wildlife compensation.

The projects undertaken by FWCP help conserve and enhance local fish and wildlife populations impacted by the construction of BC Hydro dams. These are funds Hydro must spend as part of their water licenses for the hydro dams in the region. Hydroelectric development has had significant environmental impacts on our region, thus making the FWCP an important service that mitigates the negative impacts via qualified people on the ground where the work is needed.

The FWCP projects are making a difference, from conservation and enhancement programs, to restoration of habitat, to species conservation, and invasive plant control. Biologists from FWCP also play a major role in fish and wildlife research, education, and communication in the region. As an example, FWCP staff have long served on advisory committees to Selkirk College programs, in particular the Recreation Fish and Wildlife diploma program.

That BC Hydro would spend close to \$1 billion on the Government's Smart Meter Initiative, and over \$45 billion in 30 years on private power contracts, and then slash an effective program that costs so little fails to make good sense for the Kootenay region. This is an incredible step backwards both environmentally and socially and it must be reversed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Mungall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M".

Michelle Mungall, MLA
(Nelson-Creston)

MM/dm