



Steelhead Society of BC
110 – 1140 Austin Avenue
Coquitlam, B.C. V3K 3P5

(by regular and electronic mail)

Dear Premier Clark

Re: Kokish River Hydroelectric Project

The Kokish River is a small stream on northern Vancouver Island with extremely high fisheries and biodiversity values. The Kokish contains a rare population of wild summer-run steelhead (as opposed to the more common winter-run steelhead). Only two other streams on the east coast of Vancouver Island still have reasonably healthy runs of wild summer-run steelhead. Summer-run steelhead are highly prized by sport anglers and the Kokish fishery is an important contributor to the local tourism economy.

The mainstem Kokish River is only about ten kilometres in length. Brookfield Renewable Power proposes to divert the majority of the stream flow into nine kilometres of pipe in order to produce “run of the river” electricity. The entire length of the proposed diversion reach is important rearing, spawning and migration habitat for summer-run steelhead and other anadromous trout, char and salmon.

If the project proceeds, we anticipate at least three major, ongoing fisheries habitat impacts:

1. The amount and quality of fish habitat in the diversion reach will be severely reduced as a result of decreased stream flow;
2. Blockage or delay of adult fish migrating upstream at both the upstream water intake and the downstream tailrace, as well as in the reduced-flow diversion reach; and
3. Entrainment, blockage or delay of juvenile fish migrating downstream by the water intake, and further delay in the reduced-flow diversion reach.

The Steelhead Society does not believe these impacts can be sufficiently mitigated with any degree of certainty. In terms of potential anadromous fisheries impacts, the Kokish proposal may be the worst example of an existing or proposed small hydro project in British Columbia. This is not “green power” as any perceived carbon reduction values cannot possibly outweigh the destruction of this very valuable and unique fish habitat. This proposal reflects poorly on all hydro power projects.

Premier Clark, in order to save Kokish River steelhead, we ask you to halt the proposed Kokish Hydroelectric Project. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

original signed by

Brian Braidwood
President,
Steelhead Society of BC

Cc (by electronic mail only)

Terry Lake, Minister of Environment
Steve Thompson, Minister of Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations
Claire Trevena, MLA North Island
Adrian Dix, MLA
Mike Farnworth, MLA
John Horgan, MLA
Gail Shea, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
John Duncan, MP
Finn Donnelly, MP
and wide distribution in the fisheries conservation and environmental community