

**From:** "Minister, ENV ENV:EX" <ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca>  
**Subject:** Update - BC's New Environmental Assessment Act  
**Date:** November 5, 2018 at 2:54:14 PM PST  
**To:** "[aburger@uvic.ca](mailto:aburger@uvic.ca)" <[aburger@uvic.ca](mailto:aburger@uvic.ca)>

Reference: 334487

*November 5, 2018*

Alan E. Burger  
President  
BC Nature  
Email: [aburger@uvic.ca](mailto:aburger@uvic.ca)

Dear Alan E. Burger:

Thank you for your submission on behalf of your organization on proposed changes to British Columbia's environmental assessment (EA) process. Your comments were helpful in forming BC's new *Environmental Assessment Act*, which I'm pleased to say I introduced to the House today.

The changes to BC's EA process this government is proposing through Bill 51 represent substantial enhancements to the protection of BC's environment, the transparency of the process, and opportunities for public engagement.

These changes also embody a marked shift in the relationship between the Province, Indigenous nations and the land on which we are so privileged to live, work and play.

In revitalizing BC's EA process, we focused on three main goals:

1. Enhancing public confidence, transparency and meaningful participation;
2. Advancing reconciliation with First Nations; and
3. Protecting the environment while offering clear pathways to sustainable project approvals.

Some highlights of the changes include:

- Earlier public engagement, additional legislated public comment periods, Community Advisory Committees and public participant funding.
- The EA process clearly articulated in the new Act, including matters the Ministers must consider when making a decision to issue a certificate.
- Enhanced independence of the process through expert and peer reviews.
- Ministers' reasons for decisions are posted publicly and must address required considerations.
- Easier to understand materials, so the public can more meaningfully participate in the process.
- The purpose of the EAO includes a commitment to sustainability as well as supporting reconciliation and the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

- Seeking consensus with all participating Indigenous nations throughout the EA process, including two main decision points where participating Indigenous nations can notify of consent or lack of consent on major decisions.
- Empowering Indigenous led assessments and authorizing government-to-government agreements on the conduct of EAs with EAO.
- Enabling requests that a project to be designated as reviewable with clear decision criteria.

If passed, the new *Environmental Assessment Act* will be brought into force through regulation in late 2019. As a priority, the EAO will be developing the following regulations: Reviewable Projects, Regional Assessments, Dispute Resolution and Fees and Funding. The EAO will be engaging directly with Indigenous nations, industry, non-governmental organizations and broadly with the public through much of 2019 to inform the development of these regulations, as well as key policies and other materials to support an efficient transition to the new *Environmental Assessment Act*.

The news release related to the introduction of the legislation can be [read here](#).

The new *Environmental Assessment Act* as introduced to the house can be viewed on the [Legislative Assembly website](#).

Thank you again for contributing to the revitalization of BC's *Environmental Assessment Act*.

Sincerely,

George Heyman  
Minister