

# Invoke the Precautionary Principle, no Highway through the Sooke Hills Wilderness

Posted by Joan Russow

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Global Compliance Research Project



from Sooke Mirror

In 1992, when there was a NDP Government, I received the following from Freedom of information;

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In a document obtained through the Freedom of information Act there was evidence of the Provincial cabinet endorsement for the ratification of the Biodiversity and Climate Change Conventions:

..."The Province endorsed the ratification. We agreed with Canada to ratify it. There was provincial endorsement. The move to endorse the Conventions was made by John Cashore, the then B.C. Minister of Environment" Cashore then went to Cabinet, sought their support and endorsement of the ratification and then stated that the Cabinet had approved the Conventions to the CCME meeting

Through the endorsement, the BCT NDP government agreed to the precautionary principle as expressed in the UN Framework convention on Climate change and the convention on Biological Diversity. (obtained through freedom of information ,1992)

**□ □ □ In the legally binding Convention on Biological Diversity, the precautionary principle reads;**

Where there is a threat of significant reduction or loss of biological diversity, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to avoid or minimize such a threat

**In the legally binding UN Framework Convention on climate change there was the obligation:**

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to take precautionary measures to anticipate, prevent or minimize the causes of climate change and mitigate its adverse effects. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing such measures. (UNFCCC, 1992)

### **Under the Framework Convention on Climate Change is the following obligation;**

Under Article 2 of the legally binding UN Framework Convention on Climate change, states are to stabilize greenhouse gases below a level of dangerous anthropogenic emission. (UNFCCC)

### **In the universally adopted Rio Declaration, the precautionary principle reads;**

Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, [to the environment and human health] lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation." (Rio Declaration, UNCED1992).

\*interpretation of the precautionary principle in the Rio Declaration

Precautionary principle extended to be applied to health article by World Health organization [www.euro.who.int/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/91173/E83079.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/91173/E83079.pdf) PDF file. In this file the precautionary principle has been extended to cover health.

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In 1993, I participated in the NDP working group to determine criteria for discharging emissions; at that time, as a result of the working group, the precautionary principle became part of the ministry of the environment.

The proposal to build a highway or expand any roadway through the Sooke Hills Wilderness Park (i) could be a threat to loss or reduction of biodiversity;

(ii) could increase the contribution to climate change (iii) could cause serious or irreversible damage (iv) could be a threat to human health through endangering the water supply

I urge the NDP government to invoke the precautionary principle and immediately cancel any plans to build or expand any roadway through the Sooke Hills Wilderness Park.