

SECTION 2 COUNCIL CORRESPONDENCE City Manager Deputy City Manager Dir. Engineering Environment Committee (June 14)
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**From:** Pivnick, Evan [<mailto:Evan.Pivnick@leg.bc.ca>]

**Sent:** May-18-16 5:03 PM

**To:** Weaver.MLA, Andrew

**Subject:** Office of Andrew Weaver - Introducing an Environmental Bill of Rights

Dear Mayor and Council,

Please find attached a letter from me concerning the introduction of Bill M236 – *Environmental Bill of Rights Act, 2016*. I am emailing you because you are one of the 47 municipalities across our province that signed on to the David Suzuki Foundation's Blue Dot Tour, and have made a declaration about the right our citizens have to a healthy environment.

If you have any comments or questions, please feel free to get in touch with my office.

All the best,

Andrew

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**Andrew Weaver, M.L.A.**  
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**Province of  
British Columbia**  
Legislative Assembly

**Legislative Office:**  
Room 027  
Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

May 18th, 2016

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing you to inform you and your colleagues about a Bill I introduced in the BC Legislature: The *Environmental Bill of Rights Act, 2016*.

You are receiving this letter because you are one of the 47 municipalities across our province that signed on to the David Suzuki Foundation's Blue Dot Tour, and have made a declaration about the right our citizens have to a healthy environment.

I was at the back of the room in Vancouver last September when the Union of BC Municipalities endorsed resolution A5, which called on the Province of British Columbia to enact a provincial environmental Bill of rights.

Yesterday in the Legislature I introduced a bill intituled Environmental Bill of Rights Act, 2016.

This Bill specifically states that British Columbians' have a right to a healthy environment and that it is the government's responsibility to protect it for this generation as well as those to come. There are five key components to this Bill. The Bill:

1. outlines the Rights and Responsibilities of the BC Government and its residents when it comes to environmental decision making;
2. creates a publicly accessible one-stop-shop for environmental information;
3. ensures that all ministries consider the environmental impacts their operations may be responsible for;
4. creates an environmental commissioner responsible for investigating violations, providing the public an opportunity to participate in and access the decision making process, and providing regular reports about the state of the B.C. environment.
5. protects whistle blowers who act to prevent or mitigate environmental damage.

I am no longer confident that the next generation of British Columbians will enjoy the same opportunities that we have today. The problem is that governments are frequently pitting the environment against industry and it doesn't have to be that way.

The rhetoric that we hear in this province — 'the forces of no,' 'get to yes' no matter what the question is — is not helpful to anybody, despite the fact that it's a great sound bite. The intention of my bill is to create the rules in which industry can operate. Industry has crying out for this; the last thing industry

wants is uncertainty. They want to know what the rules are. They want to know what the penalties are. They want to know how they can do business in British Columbia.

It's also important to note that this conversation is taking place across the country. A number of jurisdictions across Canada already have some form of an Environmental Bill of Rights in place including Ontario, Quebec, Yukon, NWT and Nunavut. In addition, Manitoba and Nova Scotia have now had Bills introduced to their respective legislatures.

It's time that we moved on from the outdated thinking that every environmental law brought forward is somehow an attack on industry. I have visited projects across British Columbia and the most successful businesses, which also create the greatest benefits for their local economy, are those that account for their impacts on the environment. This should become the norm for anyone who wants to do business in B.C.

I want to thank you for raising your voice on this issue and I hope the Bill I have introduced will help you to continue to have this conversation in your communities.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Weaver', with a stylized, cursive script.

Andrew Weaver  
MLA Oak Bay – Gordon Head  
Leader, BC Green Party