



## ABOUT WEST COAST ENVIRONMENTAL LAW

### Who We Are

West Coast Environmental Law is a non-profit group of environmental law strategists, analysts and communicators working in the public interest and dedicated to safeguarding the environment through law.

### Transforming the Legal Landscape

West Coast is committed to transforming the legal landscape in ways that are more sustainable, more democratic and more just.

We recognize the jurisdiction and laws of Indigenous peoples who have actively governed their territories for millennia, and the role of their land and marine stewardship in shaping the ecological conditions that have allowed all beings to thrive through time. Working side-by-side with them we seek legal solutions that bridge between Canadian and Indigenous law to build greater sustainability for all.

We take an ecosystem-based approach to our legal work because we understand that functioning ecosystems are the essential foundation of healthy cultures and economies, and that human cultures and economies are part of a web of life that includes all parts of the ecosystem and all beings.

We are leaders in the field of environmental law, using legislation and case law in strategic ways to advance environmental goals. At the same time, we are committed to shining the light on laws that contribute to unsustainable or unjust conditions in society and to building well-researched, comprehensive, practical legal solutions.

We understand that supporting the self-determination of Indigenous peoples and the revitalization of strong, living Indigenous laws consistent with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action does not diminish the importance of strong Canadian environmental laws, but rather enriches and strengthens our shared legal landscape.

We believe that the involvement of diverse communities in developing, applying and upholding the law is essential to the legitimacy and health of legal orders and human societies, and to protecting the environment in which we live. We are committed to building community and individual capacity to engage with law and environmental decision-making to achieve shared environmental goals. Through deep connections with communities, we build more resilient solutions and become more effective legal practitioners through mutual learning.

## What We Do

West Coast Environmental Law harnesses the power of law to solve complex environmental challenges. We are transforming environmental decision-making and strengthening legal protection for the environment through collaborative legal strategies that bridge Indigenous and Canadian law. By putting the law in the hands of communities and creating legal risk for those who would harm our land, air and water, we are building the collective power to achieve a more just and sustainable future for all.

We provide hard-hitting legal analysis to allies, influencers and decision-makers. In doing so we:

- motivate and enable allies to bring their varied sources of power to bear to implement creative legal solutions to environmental challenges that are shaped in collaboration with our legal team;
- position ourselves as a knowledgeable expert resource for decision-makers; and,
- identify and amplify the legal risks of unsustainable activities or proposals to create the conditions for more sustainable outcomes.

We work with Indigenous clients and allies to identify principles of Indigenous law, develop contemporary legal instruments and implement strategies grounded in both Canadian and Indigenous law to care for land, air, water and communities and to improve environmental governance.

As a public interest law organization, we are committed to advancing access to justice and to public legal education so that individuals and communities have the tools and legal support they need to use the law effectively. This includes a commitment to the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, colour, national origin, gender, (dis)ability, age or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental law, regulations and policies. In particular, we recognize that Indigenous, Black, people of colour and low-income communities disproportionately shoulder the burden of climate change and other environmental harms, and we work to ensure the voices of racialized and marginalized individuals and communities are foundational to environmental decision-making.

We advocate for, lead and participate in participatory, deliberative processes to involve communities in shaping legal solutions and addressing environmental racism. We do so within an environmental justice frame, conscious of the importance of breaking down silos between environmental and other social justice movements, and seeking to address environmental challenges while simultaneously promoting an equitable society. This includes prioritizing an active antiracist and decolonial practice within our work to defend people and the planet from environmental harms, and in building legal solutions.



### West Coast Environmental Law

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