



Reference: 349364
X-Reference: 10400-60/LWMP CRD Core

OCT 29 2019

Colin Plant, Chair
and Directors
Capital Regional District Board
PO Box 1000 625 Fisgard Street
Victoria BC V8W 2S9

Dear Chair Plant and Directors:

Thank you for the June 21, 2019, submission of the Capital Regional District (CRD) Biosolids Beneficial Use Strategy, in accordance with the conditions of approval of the Core Area Liquid Waste Management Plan (CALWMP) Amendment No.11. The Strategy forms part of the CALWMP and, therefore, requires approval from the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy.

Pursuant to Section 24(5) of the *Environmental Management Act*, I hereby approve the Strategy under the following conditions:

Short Term

- a) The CRD must not landfill biosolids in the event of scheduled cement plant shutdowns.
- b) By April 30, 2020, the CRD must submit for approval an updated Contingency Plan that has more fully assessed options for use of the Class A biosolids in contingency circumstances. This assessment must include scenarios under which land application could be utilized prior to landfilling; information about timing and duration of scheduled cement plant shutdowns; and an estimate of unscheduled shutdown duration and frequency based on operational history is required.
- c) By June 1, 2021, the CRD must submit an updated Net Energy Balance Assessment and Greenhouse Gas Emission Estimate.

Long Term

- a) The CRD must include land application in the options analysis and conduct consultation for the long-term biosolids strategy that is intended to be implemented by January 1, 2025.
- b) Options considered should include a range of beneficial uses including, but not limited to forestry (for example, fertilizer/soil conditioner), reclamation (for example, mines), landfill closure and agriculture.
- c) This consultation process must include citizens, local government and Indigenous communities within the CRD.

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The ministry's waste management policy framework is guided by the 5R Pollution Prevention Hierarchy (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recovery and Residuals Management). In accordance with the hierarchy, landfilling should only be considered when all other options are implemented or exhausted. As such, I expect the CRD to continue to look for alternative means of beneficially using biosolids in the short term to accommodate predictable disruptions in the cement plant's ability to use the product. This strategy may include increasing the short-term storage on site or applying biosolids to the land but cannot include disposal or long-term storage in the landfill. It's important that a robust consultation process is undertaken with respect to developing this strategy for the CRD.

The CRD's policy banning the land application of biosolids unnecessarily limits the options available for beneficial use. While respecting the CRD Board's authority to create such a policy, it is the ministry's position that the land application of biosolids, in accordance with the Organic Matter Recycling Regulation (OMRR), will benefit the environment and potentially reduce costs to the taxpayer. The OMRR includes requirements for biosolids treatment, quality testing and the creation of site-specific land application plans, by qualified professionals, to ensure that the land application of biosolids is both safe and beneficial. OMRR also contains specific requirements for providing notification prior to any land application activity and provisions that specify where biosolids can be placed to ensure protection of drinking water and the environment. Land application is widely practiced by other regional districts in British Columbia, in other jurisdictions in Canada and worldwide.

The benefits of land application of biosolids include addition of organic matter and nutrients to the soil to support plant growth (a more sustainable option compared to chemical fertilizers), increased carbon sequestration, decreased greenhouse gas emissions, and increased soil water holding capacity. Examples of beneficial use include, but are not limited to, landfill closure activities, mine reclamation and augmenting soils in our forests to promote regrowth.

The CRD has committed to implement a long-term strategy for biosolids management by January 1, 2025, as part of the CALWMP. The long-term biosolids strategy development process will provide an opportunity for CRD to conduct a full-options analysis of biosolids beneficial uses, including land application. A full-options analysis of costs and benefits will allow CRD to conduct informed public consultation and to meaningfully engage with Indigenous communities.

Please continue to work with staff in the Environmental Protection Division of the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy on the development of the long-term beneficial use strategy.

Sincerely,



George Heyman
Minister

cc: Cassandra Counce, Director, Authorizations South, Environmental Protection Division,
Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy