



CITY OF COLWOOD

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Capital Regional District
625 Fisgard Street
Victoria, British Columbia
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Attention: Alastair Bryson, Chair

Re: Sewage Treatment

I want to share with you some very real concerns that Colwood Council has with regard to the payments for sewage treatment.

Discussion at the Council table Monday night regarding the allocation of the CRD's latest requisition on sewage treatment has highlighted the difficulty in applying the model that apparently works for the rest of the CRD to the community of Colwood. We are in a different position because only 14% of our population is currently connected to the sewer system, and yet the community is being asked to pay for future capacity that will likely not be required for many years. The recent Board decision means that Colwood is being asked to pay over \$212,000 this year (with increasing amounts in future years). This equates to a 2% lift on property taxes, with a very significant hit (doubling of sewer fees) on those connected to sewers. To make things worse, this has come to all of us at a stage when we are well into the budget cycle, leaving little time to find ways to mitigate the "hit" to our residents.

These concerns are compounded when we look to the future. A decade or so after the opening of the proposed central plant, a second West Shore plant is proposed to cope with the anticipated growth. It is unlikely that this second plant will benefit from grant support, CRD staff have assured that the unit cost on this smaller plant will be larger than the currently proposed plant and there can be no guarantee of contributions from non-West Shore municipalities, so Colwood taxpayers will face an increase then which will be many times larger than the current program. The sum total cost for Colwood taxpayers will far exceed the costs to the other CALWMP participants. Add to this the very real potential for cost overruns in the currently proposed plant (which are so common on projects of this size) which increase will have no support of grants from the other governments and the main sewage treatment as it is emerging is a poor solution for sewage treatment in Colwood and very hard to sell to our community.

This is why the City of Colwood is actively investigating the option of building the beginnings of the future WestShore plant now when there is the opportunity to build in a modular format that is built now for current capacity needs and easily adapted for additional capacity as growth occurs whilst also taking advantage of the opportunities to use the recovered heat and water in the new development taking place in Colwood. This approach would only be inconsistent with the LWMP in terms of timing but otherwise would conform to it. Importantly it would reduce our overall costs while helping the region and the province achieve its sustainability goals as reflected in the regional plans and the Minister of the Environment's letters ordering the treatment of sewage. It would also reduce the capital cost of future capacity increase improvements to the Northwest Trunk Sewer, and prolong the design life of the downtown plant by providing additional space for future growth in other areas.

I hope you appreciate our position, and I look forward to discussing this with you and the CALWMC members in more detail.

Yours truly,



Carol Hamilton,
Mayor