

**REPORT TO ELECTORAL AREA SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, 07 FEBRUARY 2007**

SUBJECT COMMUNITY WORKS FUND AGREEMENT AMENDMENT

PURPOSE/ISSUE

The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of a proposed amendment to the Community Works Fund (CWF) Agreement which would allow the CRD to partner with other local governments or non-government entities.

HISTORY/BACKGROUND

The CRD signed the Community Works Fund Agreement to transfer federal gas tax revenues to cities and communities with UBCM on December 16, 2005. The agreement obliges the local government (electoral areas) to maintain all administrative, corporate and accounting records related to the receipt and expenditure of all CWF allocations in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and retain these records for three years beyond the expiry date of March 31, 2015.

The attached amendment will allow for participation in an eligible project that is owned, in whole or in part, by another local government or an eligible recipient that is not a local government. If the participation is with another local government (i.e. an improvement district), the CRD's report must indicate the amount spent on the project and the identity of the local government that will fulfill the detailed reporting requirements for the Project. For a project that is owned, in whole or in part, by a recipient that is not a local government (i.e. a non-profit organization) then the CRD must ensure through an agreement with the owner of that asset that the CRD is able to fulfill its commitments under the CWF Agreement in relation to the eligible project.

There is currently a proposal to partner with others to proceed with an aeration project for St. Mary's Lake on Salt Spring Island.

ALTERNATIVES

- 1) Approve the Community Works Fund Agreement Amendment.
- 2) Not approve the Community Works Fund Agreement Amendment.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no financial implication.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS

The Community Works Fund (CWF) Agreement Amendment will enable the electoral areas to participate in non local government owned eligible projects in their communities. A separate agreement to fulfill the reporting requirements will be required for an eligible project with a non-local government eligible recipient. Without this amendment participation in the St. Mary's Lake project on Salt Spring Island would not be possible.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board approve the attached Community Works Fund Agreement Amendment to the Canada-British Columbia-Union of British Columbia Municipalities Agreement on the Transfer of Federal Gas Tax Revenues under the New Deal for Cities and Communities.

Rita M. Estock, Dip Bus Admin, FCGA
Financial Services Division

Diana E. Lokken, Dip Bus Admin, CMA
General Manager Concurrence

Kelly Daniels
CAO Concurrence

COMMENTS

Attachment: (1)

THE FEDERAL GAS TAX REVENUES AND THE SOUTHERN GULF ISLANDS

The enclosed information was written at the request of Susan DeGryp for the purposes of promoting water conservation measures and program within the SGI electoral district. It covers all areas addressed by Ms DeGryp as well as one area that could be addressed and comply with the GTA.

As is stated within the documents, the programs and goals that would **most** benefit the Gulf Islands water conservation processes are not able to be acted upon due to the wording within the GT agreements.

Recently, amendments were passed to accommodate a Salt Spring project on behalf of an Improvement District water purveyor drawing from St Mary's Lake. It then would appear reasonable to request an amendment that would allow the SGI to proceed with the low flush toilet installation pilot project that could use Mayne Island as a test area, and if successful, adapted to the other islands within the SGI boundaries.

There are compelling reasons why this should occur. Over the past few years, more and more water systems have had problems with a secure supply of potable water for their consumers, whether they draw from surface water (lakes) or groundwater (wells). This is occurring for several reasons. One major factor is the increase in development on all the Gulf Islands. Mayne Island has had a 26.4% increase in population over the past 5 years according to Statistic Canada. This is on top of the increased pressure from tourism, which draws to the islands the type of water consumer that is not generally educated in long term water conservation, or is on vacation and simply doesn't care.

The massive swing in population residency times also exacerbate our water problems. In the rainy season, the population remains low and, in general, triples during the drought season.

Generally, wells are being drilled deeper today than 20 years ago, indicating a lowering of the aquifer levels. The current climactic conditions appear to have us in longer summer drought periods(5 months in 2006) and harder rainfall and less snowfall in the winter. Driving rains tend to run off and not recharge the aquifers upon which our wells rely . When we tie this in with the ditching that our islands have been subjected to in the past, groundwater recharge becomes a real issue.

In setting up Mayne Island as a pilot project area, we would be dealing with an island totally reliant upon wells. There are 1107 private dwellings. It would be my estimate that approximately 40% of these already have low flush toilets, due to either retro fits or new construction. I use this figure as it is the approximate percentage arrived at by Bennett Bay Waterworks District when we assessed our low flush toilet rebate program in early 2006.

The type of low flush installation program recommended here is based on the one in operation now in the Sunshine Coast Regional District. They offer free dual flush toilets, low flow showerheads and installation to anyone who qualifies. They assess the cost at \$300.00 per installation, funded from tax dollars. Their program was initiated as an alternative to major infrastructure expansion and upgrades and the enormous costs.

It seems a sensible application for the Gas Tax Revenues and would appear to be in total compliance with the intent of the Agreements, if not the wording. It is hoped that through either the amendment process, or the appeal process if necessary, SGI will be able to lead the way within the CRD and the Gulf Islands, by setting an example of actual water conservation on a practical level, one where both the aquifers and the consumers future supply of potable water will be preserved and protected.

I might add that we cannot wait. It will be unproductive to say ten years from now that we should have moved sooner to ensure our island water sustainability. This funding, that has come from all of the gas tax payers, can be redistributed in such a way with this program as to benefit as many as possible and the entire islands aquifers, and not simply those that are on CRD managed infrastructured systems.

Respectfully submitted by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary E. Cooper". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mary E. Cooper,
Co-Chair,
Mayne island Integrated Water Systems Society