

March 4, 2009

Honourable Kevin Kruger
Minister of Community Development
Room 124, Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Kruger:

RE: INFORMATION TO SUPPORT A GOVERNANCE STUDY

I am writing in response to your February 9 request for information to support a governance study for the communities of Otter Point, Shirley and Jordan River. My understanding is that \$40,000 would be available from the province to support the study, and that the Capital Regional District (CRD) and the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area (JdFEA) would need to be participating partners in the study.

BACKGROUND

The topic of governance in the JdFEA has been visited four times in the past eight years.

1. In 2001 the **Ben Marr Report**, commissioned by the CRD Board, studied governance options for the six sub-regions in the in JdFEA. The CRD Board voted against a restructuring of the JdFEA that would have added further directors to the CRD Board. The status quo with a restructuring of the Land Use Committee prevailed.
2. In 2002 – 2005 the **Sooke Boundary Restructure Committee**, supported by the province, studied a boundary extension that would have included the addition of East Sooke, Otter Point and Shirley to the District of Sooke. This proposal was overwhelmingly defeated by JdFEA residents in a 2005 referendum.
3. In 2006, residents from the communities of Otter Point and Shirley petitioned the province for a governance study, however, the province would not support a study that examined governance options. The Otter Point and Shirley Governance Study committee did not support proceeding with a study that did not include incorporation as one of the options. The offer of doing a governance study was declined by the committee and the province transferred the funding to the East Sooke/Metchosin study.
4. In 2008, the CRD Electoral Area Director provided limited funding for the Otter Point and Shirley communities to complete a Strategic Vision project. The report has now been finalized (attached) and identifies the need to change and improve governance as one of the community's most important goals.

In addition to the work completed by the community to examine these concerns and as part of the Strategic Vision project, the Otter Point and Shirley Governance Study committee previously requested a governance options study to achieve the following objectives:

- prevent further annexations
- allow local control over subdivision applications

- allow local control over road specifications
- ensure that locally elected representatives were making land use and service decisions

The problems associated with trying to provide good government to the JdFEA cannot be fixed by merely "tweaking" the current system to keep it going for another few years. Changes to the governance of the JdFEA need to address concerns about the need for local decision making with respect to land use and the management of development, environmental protection, parks, and the relationship with adjacent municipalities and first nations.

Given that the communities of Otter Point, Shirley and Jordan River would like to take a higher role in trying to plan for their needs for the next generation and in light of the huge land development pressures that have been passed along to them by the province with the release of the private forest lands from TFL 25, I request that the province and the CRD support a comprehensive governance study that would allow the community to study a wide range of options as they try to select a mode of governance that would meet their present as well as their future need for good government.

Yours truly,

Mike Hicks, Regional Director
Juan de Fuca Electoral Area

cc John Horgan, MLA, Malahat/Juan de Fuca
Geoff Young, Chair, CRD Board
Ken Hancock, Chair, CRD Electoral Area Services Committee
Graham Hill, Chair, CRD Planning & Transportation Committee
Gary Paget, Executive Director, Ministry of Community Development, Governance and Structure Division
Bob Lapham, General Manager, CRD Planning & Protective Services Department