



**REPORT TO JUAN DE FUCA WATER DISTRIBUTION COMMISSION
MEETING OF TUESDAY, 3 FEBRUARY 2009**

SUBJECT 2008 CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEY

PURPOSE

To gauge the attitudes of customers of the Juan de Fuca Retail Water Distribution service area and their views of CRD Water Services level of customer service.

BACKGROUND

The survey was initiated as a result of several requests daily to deliver additional payment options and provide a paperless billing option to customers. Ipsos Reid Public Affairs was hired to undertake a Customer Service Survey to gauge the attitudes of residential water users located in the Juan de Fuca Retail Water Distribution service area regarding various areas of customer service within CRD Water Services. The survey was intended to establish benchmarks for system development within the billing software and an overall customer satisfaction. Two focus groups of 10 customers and a total of 400 telephone interviews were conducted for the survey which produced an accuracy rate to within \pm 4.9 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Key Findings

Some of the key findings of the survey are:

Familiarity and Overall Satisfaction with CRD Water Services:

- The majority of residents (79%) are familiar with CRD Water Services.
- A very strong majority (94%) say that based on their own experiences, they are satisfied overall with CRD Water Services, with 54% indicating they are "very satisfied".
- A total of 48% say they are not very or not at all satisfied with CRD Water Services due to the cost of water.
- 24% of the customers are dissatisfied with water restrictions.

Customer Service

- Only 27% of the respondents have contacted CRD Water Services in the past two years.
- Three-quarters of customers who contacted CRD Water Services within the past two years did so by telephone (74%), and one in five customers contacted CRD Water Services in person (19%).
- Thinking specifically of their most recent contact with CRD Water Services, 93% said they are satisfied with the overall customer service provided.
- Satisfaction was also high within specific components of customer service including:
 - Courteousness of staff – 95% very or somewhat satisfied, 76% very satisfied.
 - Staff's accessibility – 94% very or somewhat satisfied, 69% very satisfied.
 - Staff's professionalism – 94% very or somewhat satisfied, 72% very satisfied.
 - Speed and timeliness of service – 93% very or somewhat satisfied, 68% very satisfied.
 - Staff's knowledge – 91% very or somewhat satisfied, 62% very satisfied.
 - Staff's ability to understand your needs – 89% very or somewhat satisfied, 61% very satisfied.
 - Staff's responsiveness – 88% very or somewhat satisfied, 69% very satisfied.
 - Staff's helpfulness – 86% very or somewhat satisfied, 65% very satisfied.
 - Staff's issue resolution ability – 79% very or somewhat satisfied, 62% very satisfied.
 - Overall customer service – 93% very or somewhat satisfied, 69% very satisfied.

- Only 8 residents out of 400 surveyed, (2%) say they are not satisfied with the overall customer service they received.

Satisfaction with Specific CRD Water Services

- Reliability of water service – 99% very or somewhat satisfied, 86% very satisfied.
- Quality of water – 98% very or somewhat satisfied, 76% very satisfied.

CRD Water Services Billing

- A large majority of customers (92%) are satisfied with the ease of reading their water bill.
- Virtually all residents (96%) say they are satisfied with the available options for bill payment.
- *There is considerable interest (87%) in the addition of tracking monthly water consumption similar to BC Hydro and the graph they display on their bills.*
- Many residents are interested in the addition of online bill payment (63%), and electronic billing (56%);
 - The popularity of online bill payment and electronic billing is especially high among younger residents and those with higher incomes.
- Interest in credit card bill payments – 28% very or somewhat interested, 10% very interested.
- Preauthorized bank payments – 27% very or somewhat interested, 11% very interested.

Water Infrastructure

- A strong majority (91%) support CRD Water Services continuing to invest in aging infrastructure to maintain a reliable and safe drinking water service even if it results in increased water rates;
 - Specifically, 45% of customers strongly supported the continued investment.
- Among the few who opposed CRD Water Services continuing to invest in renewing aging infrastructure (5%), the main reason is an increase in the cost of water (62%).

CRD Water Services' Website

- One in five residents (18%) have visited CRD Water Services website.
- Information and content of website – 92% very or somewhat satisfied, 44% very satisfied.
- Ease of navigating the website – 90% very or somewhat satisfied, 51% very satisfied.
- Functionality of website – 88% very or somewhat satisfied, 40% very satisfied.

SUMMARY

A full copy of the survey will be made available on the CRD's website at www.crd.bc.ca/water, or a hard copy may be obtained by contacting Margaret Montague at CRD Water Services.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Juan de Fuca Water Distribution Commission receive the staff report for information.

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Concurrence