



Making a difference...together

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General Correspondence
0400-20
Correspondence/Meetings/General

Dr. Richard Stanwick
Chief Medical Health Officer
Island Health
430 - 1900 Richmond Avenue
Victoria, BC V8R 4R2
via email: richard.stanwick@viha.ca

Dear Dr. Stanwick:

RE: CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT WATERWAYS AND BEACHES

On behalf of the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board, I am writing to express disappointment in Island Health's decision to discontinue summer bacteriological sampling for Vancouver Island bathing beaches.

In a September 6, 2018 letter, Island Health notified owners and operators of recreational bathing beaches on Vancouver Island that, beginning in 2019, they would be responsible for collecting bacteriological beach samples and delivering them to their local health protection office. In large part, bathing beaches are associated with regional or municipal parks, and the responsibility for this important service has effectively been shifted from the Province to local governments.

Due to outdated information with Island Health's contact database, local government beach owners did not receive Island Health's communication until February 2019, leaving them with inadequate time to plan sampling for the 2019 bathing season. Subsequently, many of the bathing beaches in the region did not receive adequate sampling this past summer.

Moving forward, the CRD has proposed a plan whereby CRD staff will collect samples from recreational beaches across the region that can be incorporated under pre-existing CRD services. We appreciate that Island Health will continue to bear the cost of sample analysis and shipping for samples, as well as interpret the results and advise on any actions beach owners may need to take if bacterial results are indicative of risk.

We appreciate ongoing efforts to collaborate and improve coordination between all stakeholders to ensure public safety at our regional beaches.

Sincerely,

Colin Plant
Chair
Capital Regional District Board

cc: CRD Board Members
Robert Lapham, Chief Administrative Officer, CRD
Larisa Hutcheson, General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services, CRD
The Honourable Adrian Dix, Minister of Health
The Honourable George Heyman, Minister of Environment & Climate Change Strategy