



Sewage Treatment

The issue of sewage treatment is of growing importance to the people of Esquimalt. This matter impacts each one of us. I cannot overestimate the importance that Sewage Treatment decisions will have on Esquimalt. Financially the repercussions will go on for generations. Environmentally - even longer. We need to make good choices that our children and our grandchildren can live with.

As a response to the importance of this issue, the Esquimalt Residents Association held a Sewage Treatment Forum on March 1st 2008. We were pleased to have Dwayne Kalychuk from the CRD, Gilbert Cote from the township of Esquimalt, Dr. Rebecca Warburton from Responsible Sewage Treatment Victoria, Jim McIssac from TBuck Suzuki and Kim Bellefontaine from Sewage Treatment Action Group. Links to all their websites are below.

The presentations highlighted how long term the implications of sewage treatment are for us. This is the largest project ever attempted in the Capital Regional District. It is estimated that we will be paying for this for the next 50 years.

Our children will be paying for this and our grandchildren will be paying for this. We owe it to them to do it right.

A group of Esquimalt citizens, the Sewage Treatment Action Group (STAG) has been working very hard to advocate for positive changes to the CRD's plans for sewage treatment. They received strong, unanimous support from Esquimalt Council in February of 2008 to move the treatment site from Macaulay Point to Maclaughlin Point. Due to their continued efforts to present the clear regional and local benefits of this move, the site is now being considered by the CRD. I have had the opportunity to hear Kim Bellefontaine speak at the ERA Sewage Treatment Forum and as a delegation to the CRD Core Liquid Waste Management. Those excellent presentations are available on the STAG website: www.victoriasewagetreatment.org/ This website also contains valuable information that is relevant for everyone in Victoria - but particularly for residents of Esquimalt. My genuine thanks to STAG for their passion and dedication to this issue. We all need to be actively involved on this issue. It is through their efforts that the site location change to Maclaughlin is being considered by the CRD. They are an excellent example of dedicated, passionate people making the difference in our community. The more residents in Esquimalt that are engaged and active on this issue - the more success we will have in finding workable solutions.

Some strong messages I am hearing from Esquimalt residents are:

- "We don't want to lose greenspace at Macaulay point"
- "The proposed Macaulay point site will decrease home values and impact the quality of life for nearby residents".
- "Trucking of sludge through residential neighbourhoods is simply unacceptable - there has to be a better way to deal with the sludge"
- "Increasing traffic of large trucks in that area will be a safety hazard for the kids"
- "Esquimalt shouldn't have to handle 70% of the waste and 100% of the sludge for the Greater Victoria area. Its too big an impact on one neighbourhood."
- "What is the environmental impact of a land based sewage treatment centre?" "What will happen to the sludge?" and "Won't the trucks negatively impact the environment too?"
- "I want to be consulted before decisions are made"
- "We need to know the costs and benefits before we go ahead"
- "The costs seem out of control" and "can we afford this?"
- "Is this really a good use of our resources?"

I strongly endorse these principles:

- Seeking an independent cost/benefit analysis of land based sewage treatment.
- Moving the sewage treatment site from Macaulay Point to Maclaughlin point. Please see this page of the STAG website for an excellent description and detailed photos of why Maclaughlin Point is a far superior site. www.victoriasewagetreatment.org/macaulay.html
- Moving from the current proposed model (where Esquimalt handles 70% of the waste and 100% of Greater Victoria's sludge) to a more decentralized model (smaller plants in more locations.)
- Moving to a treatment plan that incorporates resource recovery ie. using the sludge to create heat or energy. This could provide environmental benefits as well as offset costs.
- Seeking mitigation for the impact of having a sewage plant located in Esquimalt.
- Keeping ownership, management and operation of the Sewage Treatment System public.
- Engaging the public in meaningful consultation.

For more resources and more points of view, please visit these additional links:

CRD planning website www.wastewatermadeclear.ca/

Integrated Resource Management Study www.cserv.gov.bc.ca/ministry/whatsnew/IRM.htm

Greater Victoria Water Watch Coalition www.greatervictoriawaterwatchcoalition.ca/cgi-bin/show_home.cgi

Responsible Sewage Treatment Victoria www.rstv.ca/

Georgia Strait Alliance www.georgiastrait.org/?q=node/319

Township of Esquimalt www.esquimalt.ca

TBuck Suzuki Foundation www.bucksuzuki.org/

Sewage Treatment Action Group www.victoriasewagetreatment.org