



STATE OF WASHINGTON

June 10, 2014

The Honourable Christy Clark
M.L.A., Westside - Kelowna
Premier of British Columbia
PO Box 9041, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9E1

Dear Premier Clark:

We are writing to you concerning an ongoing issue that impacts the health of the waters of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Puget Sound, as well as our regionally connected economies: wastewater treatment in Greater Victoria.

As the Governor of the state of Washington and the Executive of King County, we are very concerned by the lack of progress in treating wastewater and protecting the health and habitat of Puget Sound. We urge you to take action on this issue and resolve this impasse to ensure the timely delivery of wastewater treatment for this rapidly growing region, currently exceeding 300,000 residents. Victoria's current lack of wastewater treatment impacts the state of Washington, King County, and the more than 3.5 million residents of the Puget Sound. We all share the regional and international waterways with Greater Victoria.

Wastewater treatment in Victoria has been an issue for the state of Washington, King County, and the Province of British Columbia for over two decades. We believed and were encouraged by commitments and assurances by the Province of British Columbia that the region would soon be implementing a wastewater treatment strategy.

As you may recall, in 1993 Washington State tourism boycotts cancelled major conferences and hotel bookings in Victoria. That year, our two jurisdictions came to an agreement that Victoria would have primary sewage treatment in place by 2002 and secondary treatment between 2008 and 2013.

Years later, former Washington State Governor, The Honorable Christine Gregoire, added her support to the Province of British Columbia's bid for the 2010 Winter Olympics, provided Greater Victoria once again commit to move ahead with adequate wastewater treatment. In 2006, B.C. Minister of Environment, Barry Penner, directed the Capital Regional District to implement secondary wastewater treatment due to water quality issues at its marine outfalls.



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In 2010, residents of Puget Sound and Washington State House of Representatives applauded the approval of a wastewater treatment strategy by Minister Penner, which enabled the District to start the implementation phase of its wastewater management strategy. At that time, the District was on track to meet its regulatory commitments to the Province of British Columbia to provide sewage treatment for Greater Victoria by 2016.

In 2013, the District commenced construction on the approved wastewater treatment strategy, since renamed the Seaterra Program. However, the Seaterra Program deadlines for completion have been pushed out to 2018. We recently learned that your government has also suggested these timelines could even be pushed back, once again, to 2020.

It is now more than 20 years since your Province agreed to implement wastewater treatment in Greater Victoria, and yet today Victoria still lacks any treatment beyond simple screening. Past commitments have not been implemented. Delaying this work to 2020 is not acceptable.

We are dismayed by the current developments concerning the construction of the wastewater treatment plant as part of Greater Victoria's wastewater treatment strategy. While the District has an approved wastewater treatment strategy, its implementation appears to be stalled at the local level. After years of discussion, planning and commitments on an inter-governmental level, we urge you to get involved to ensure that this project moves forward.

Our region shares the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the health of this waterway is of interest to both the State of Washington and King County. The state, in partnership with King County and other local and regional governments, continues to take steps to improve the health of our waters and restore habitat. We make needed investments to protect the waterbodies we all share. We work collaboratively with all levels of government, tribes, businesses, and citizen groups to lead and coordinate efforts to protect and restore Puget Sound. We have invested heavily in ecosystem restoration and wastewater and storm water management projects and have hundreds of millions of dollars committed to future investments. King County is also directly supporting the Seaterra program through the approval of our Wastewater Treatment Division Director's participation as a Seaterra Commissioner.

However, the continued lack of adequate wastewater treatment in Greater Victoria – at the entrance of Puget Sound – means Greater Victoria is not doing its fair share. This is of significant concern for the health of the rest of the region's waterways.

Just as we share our common waterway, Washington and British Columbia share many common trade interests. The ongoing collaboration between our two inter-connected economies on issues such as wastewater treatment will be essential to all of our success. Left unresolved, Victoria's lack of wastewater treatment has the potential to color other regional and national issues at a time when our two countries are working to re-establish steady economic growth through various cross-border initiatives. We would hope that this issue can be resolved at the local and provincial level and strengthen the foundation for regional economic growth and national cooperation.

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We look forward to the day when all the communities that share the resources and benefits of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Puget Sound make comparable commitments to clean water for current and future generations.

Sincerely,



Jay Inslee
Governor



Dow Constantine
King County Executive

cc: The Honourable Mary Polak, M.L.A – Langley, Minister of Environment, Province of
British Columbia
Alastair Bryson, Chair, Capital Regional District Board