

Subject: North Shore Recycling Program

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A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

The corporation of the District of North Vancouver, the largest of the three North Shore Municipalities, has commissioned a process improvement review of the North Shore Recycling Program - the report is as yet confidential but since it deals with, among other issues, the recovery of revenues from other sources, I believe it is appropriate to deal with this issue in a general manner without making any specific reference to the report.

There is a fundamental flaw in the waste management and recycling policies by which municipalities are guided throughout the GVRD.

Some twenty odd years ago I participated in an international waste conference in Berlin, Germany. The trip was organized by the GVRD Waste Management Committee of which I was a member.

Before attending the conference in Berlin we visited several sites throughout Europe. This included England, Holland and Germany.

Depending on circumstances, cultural as well as economic and environmental peculiarities, the methods of waste management and recycling differed from country to country and from city to city. But they all had one crucial factor in common. Any kind of solid waste programs must be backed by government legislation compelling manufacturers to accept a certain percentage of recyclable materials in the production of new products. This is the "categorical imperative" of solid waste management and it was drilled into us at every stage of our trip including at the international conference in Berlin. Unless this is done no waste management system will work we were told. But it is precisely this crucial factor which is still missing in the Lower Mainland.

Unlike in Europe, including Germany, where recycling is market driven, in BC it is the cities and GVRD municipalities who have to accept responsibility. Cap in hand they have to find someone who will take the recyclable material off their hands. The result is that the customer, instead of getting reimbursed for the value of recyclable material, has to pay for it twice. Once when he makes the purchase in the store and the second time when he pays for its removal through the Blue Box. It leaves municipalities at the mercy of companies such as ITT and/or their customers who themselves have to operate in a volatile market.

What is particularly upsetting is that much of the valuable recycling material from the Blue Box is dumped into a landfill. At the same time, we are paying top dollars for glossy brochures telling everyone what a wonderful job we are doing. The "Free Enterprise Government of BC" is apparently not free enough to compel manufacturers to use recyclables in the production of new products. On the other hand, with such legislation in place every person engaged in the process gains because the manufacturer pays for the recyclable material delivered to his production site. This is the lesson we learned more than twenty years ago. However, upon our return, when the chair of the GVRD who was on that trip was asked what the difference was between recycling in Europe and in the GVRD he stated, without blushing, that the only difference is that they have different colored garbage bags.

As far as liquid waste is concerned here too Germany was the most advanced.


Unlike BC, where liquid waste is still in the primary treatment stage, Germany was already at the tertiary stage. Primary treatment is nothing more than the removal of solids which does little for the environment whereas, in the secondary and tertiary treatment stages, virtually all harmful toxins are removed including ammonia. It is the ammonia which is the marine life killer. Ammonia and other toxins contain all the ingredients causing cancer. They enter the food chain ending up on the dinner table. However in B C we are, at best, at the primary stage and in some instances, we are not

even doing that. Not to speak of our storm waters which are going into the rivers and oceans completely untreated.

The Federal Minister of the Environment is, however, in the process of initiating new legislation which will address this matter. I made a motion on Council that we support this initiative since the GVRD seems reluctant to do so. The GVRD cites as reason for its reluctance the cost which is estimated to be \$115 million.

My motion states that Council go on record as supporting the initiative of the Honorable David Andersen, Minister of the Environment, regarding the proposed risk management strategy addressing ammonia, inorganic chloramines and chlorinated waste water effluent, as outlined in "The Environment Canada's Plans for "CEPA" Toxic Substances". This will see these toxic substances removed from liquid effluents before being emptied into Canada's streams, rivers, lakes and oceans and that Mayor Bell be requested to vote in favor of this District of North Vancouver resolution and against the GVRD policy which, as of this moment, has "Concerns" regarding the Minister's endeavor.

During debate, one Councillor thought we could not afford it and that the money would be better spent in the East. Clearly he was confused thinking that the money will come from the federal pocket rather than from our own to solve our own problem right here in the GVRD. Obviously he did not understand that this issue is of the highest possible priority. Clearly he and others who agree with him, which includes the Councillor representing the District in the health field, did not understand that treating a cancer patient is far more expensive than preventing it in the first place. No final vote was taken since the time, having reached 11 pm, was up. The item will come back on Dec 2nd.

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