

Subject: Response to Mr Gelling's letter re discharge of untreated storm waters into our streams, rivers and oceans.

Date: Wed, 17 Nov 2004 08:27:18 -0800

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To: "Nathalie Valdes" <Nathalie_Valdes@dnv.org>

CC: "Mayor and Council - DNV" <Council@dnv.org>, "Senior Management Committee" <managecomm@dnv.org>, <fonvca@fonvca.org>, <Cagebc@yhao.com>, "James Ridge" <James_Ridge@dnv.org>

Dear Mr. Gelling:

I fully empathise with your concerns. Storm waters instead of being collected and treated are simply discharged into the streams, rivers, lakes and the oceans in Canada. This puts us into the category of a third world country. To put it bluntly, what we are doing and not just regarding storm waters but also to liquid waste would be unthinkable in most other developed countries.

However, we have no excuse since we are certainly not a poor country. It simply shows that we are still environmental barbarians who refuse to live up to our responsibilities. At the same time we are quite ready to point fingers at other countries including those who, unlike us, are poor. It is also utterly hypocritical since it is at odds with what we preach to our children in school.

The GVRD, which is responsible for such matters, is fifty years behind in their awareness and thinking. When it comes to liquid waste the situation is similar. It is difficult to believe, but we have not even completed the secondary treatment stage of liquid waste, not to speak of tertiary treatment which is essential to protect our marine and fish habitat.

As long as our political representatives to the GVRD are satisfied with the status quo more or less and as long as the voters tolerate such conditions, not much will happen to alleviate this deplorable situation. I recall making a GVRD paid trip to Europe almost 25 years ago. They had already completed the tertiary stage of their liquid waste and storm water treatment program. The debate centered around whether they should spend the money and proceed to stage four which is the final stage and is largely cosmetic. All GVRD delegates on this trip were impressed or so they said, but after we returned from the Taxpayer paid trip, it was like we never had gone there in the first place.

Your efforts are the more laudable since you get very little encouragement from either the rest of the population and/or the government.

However, I hope that, despite all difficulties, you will continue in your struggle for rational government policies.


Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention. I should mention that I have made numerous motions and initiatives to address this issue in the past, including at the GVRD level, but I must admit, with very little success. Still, we must carry on - we are soldiers and do our duty in line with our level of awareness.

A copy of this letter will be sent to Mayor and Council as well as to the press and my own contacts. I trust this meets with your approval.

Thank you,

Yours truly,

Ernie Crist

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