



Making a difference...together

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October 30, 2014

0110-20  
0400-20

The Honourable Mary Polak  
Minister of Environment  
PO Box 9047, Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E3  
*Sent by email: ENV.Minister@gov.bc.ca*

The Honourable Coralee Oakes  
Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development  
PO Box 9056, Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2  
*Sent by email: CSCD.Minister@gov.bc.ca*

Dear Ministers Polak and Oakes:

**RE: PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO SECTIONS 3.5 AND 3.6 OF FLOOD HAZARD AREA  
LAND USE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES**

The Capital Regional District (CRD) wishes to raise concerns regarding the current review of the above guidelines.

The CRD believes the scope of the consultation activities to date have been insufficient to adequately identify and address the implications that will arise as a result of such a significant policy change to the existing guidelines. We previously submitted a letter, dated August 22, to highlight some of these concerns. The current terms of reference for the consultation only call for a technical review of the proposed changes; the CRD requested both a broader scope (beyond the technical issues and to a wider audience), and an extension to the original 3-week consultation timeline. The CRD acknowledges that the Province did indeed extend the consultation period to October 31. However, we continue to raise our concern that the consultation does not include consideration of local area planning and the legal, social and financial implications associated with the proposed amendments. Further, the consultation should include consultation with a wider audience of impacted stakeholders, including, but not limited to, First Nations, private property owners, the development community, coastal industries and economic development organizations, and the insurance industry.

CRD staff currently sit on the Province's technical working group, which is reviewing the guidelines. We have submitted written comments and recommendations through that process. Concurrently, the CRD, through our role as the planning authority for the Juan de Fuca Electoral Area, also convened an internal working group and identified significant legal, political and socio-economic implications to the guidelines, if the guidelines are passed as proposed. Those observations are included in our staff comments to the consultation process.

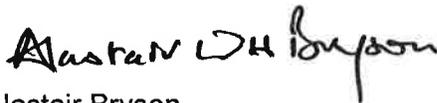
Our intention with this letter is to highlight the potential implications to coastal communities of implementing the proposed amendments to the existing guidelines.

The threat of sea level rise due to climate change poses significant risk to coastal communities across the province. However, the CRD believes that the modification of the flood plain guidelines is the wrong approach to address sea level rise. The mechanism to address permanent, ongoing sea-level rise through the guidelines is fraught with difficulties. Periodic flooding from storms or major rainfall events is distinct from permanent flooding associated with sea level rise. The former is superimposed on a rising sea level and needs a separate management framework.

From a local government perspective, the flood construction levels resulting from the guidelines have significant impacts on coastal communities now for what is a long-term issue. Implementation of the proposed guidelines has immediate financial and administrative implications for property owners and local governments. Property owners will incur significant costs to satisfy geotechnical concerns for adequate flood proofing for any new construction within the expanded flood zone. Local governments will have to respond with new flood zone mapping and consider the implications for issuing building permits and for land use planning along a retreating shoreline. There will be legal, financial and social implications for coastal communities without the provincial resources or guidance to address these concerns.

There is time to consider the risks of flood events, or other events such as tsunamis, on top of a rising sea level for coastal communities. The CRD requests that the Province consider a more comprehensive approach to sea level issue planning over the next few years in order to consider all potential implications and develop the most appropriate response. Further, the CRD requests that the provincial government review its plan to amend the Flood Hazard Area Land Use Management Guidelines and expand the consultation process to include non-technical discussions with a broader range of potentially-impacted stakeholders. This should lead to a more comprehensive, effective management approach for this very real, but long-term threat to our coastal communities.

Sincerely,



Alastair Bryson  
Chair  
Capital Regional District Board

cc: CRD Board Members  
Bob Lapham, Chief Administrative Officer, CRD