

Subject: Opinion letter for posting on mayor's race

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The last time that the Lions Gate sewage treatment facility came up for review by the District of North Vancouver was in July 2001 where a decision was made by Council that set the level of sewage treatment for the next 30 years.

Environmental groups like SPEC, that I am a Director of, were asking that we upgrade to secondary treatment as soon as possible. Right now the GVRD owned Lions Gate plant does primary treatment where only the solids are settled out and the left over liquid sewage is dumped into Burrard Inlet in the centre of the narrows directly below Lions Gate bridge in front of Capilano River, an important salmon spawning river, and beside two important waterfront parks, namely Stanley Park and Ambleside.

At the time of the vote, then councillor Doug MacKay-Dunn gave an eloquent speech outlining the above facts and voted against the GVRD Liquid Waste Management Plan that essentially recommended no upgrade for 30 years. Mayor Don Bell and Ernie Crist also voted against the GVRD plan. When it came time for councillor Janice Harris to speak she went into her usual knee-jerk defense of the GVRD and then disputed councillor MacKay-Dunn's claim that the North Shore's sewage is dumped anywhere near the Capilano River and came out with the ridiculous statement that the sewage is actually piped out into Georgia Strait. People who knew the real facts around sewage treatment were outraged by this purely fictional claim. Our sewage is not piped further out into Georgia Strait but as long as decision makers like Janice Harris imagine that it is then the GVRD doesn't have to spend anymore on treatment. The vote ended up being 4 to 3 in favour of the "do nothing for 30 years" Plan and was possibly influenced by other councillors believing councillor Harris's claims since she been involved with the GVRD for a long time and should know better. Doug MacKay-Dunn was right on the facts but outvoted by one vote.

When it comes to the important decisions of this region we need mayors who will make well informed decisions on the real facts, not rubber-stamp decisions based on imagined claims. For this reason I ask the residents of the District of North Vancouver to vote for Doug MacKay-Dunn as mayor.

Paul Hundal