

Contaminated Soil in the Shawnigan Watershed

Motion to be delivered by Bruce Fraser, Director Area B – Shawnigan Lake
to the August 1, 2012 Meeting of the CVRD Board

Whereas the Shawnigan Lake watershed, designated by government in 1995 as a “Community Watershed”, is the sole domestic water supply of over 4500 residents with the majority drawing their water from Shawnigan Lake, either directly or through licensed water purveyors, and

Whereas the Shawnigan Community has a growing population that is placing ever greater demands on the surface water and aquifers of the area, and

Whereas the Shawnigan Basin is predicted to face increasing watershed instability through the balance of this century due to climate change, and

Whereas the CVRD is a formal water purveyor that provides lake water to a group of over 2000 Shawnigan residents to whom it is legally responsible for a safe water supply, and

Whereas the watershed area is already being extensively used for dumping of soils on private land without effective environmental monitoring or controls, and

Whereas the Ministry of Environment is dealing with a current application to use contaminated soils for reclamation of a mine lying within the headwaters of the Shawnigan Community Watershed, and

Whereas it cannot be guaranteed that seismic events, major storms or human error will not lead to future contamination of water from even the best current state-of-the art engineering designs, and

Whereas there are current examples of hazardous waste reaching unapproved dump sites within the Shawnigan Watershed that have not been immediately rectified, and

Whereas the Shawnigan community bears the ultimate risks to the safety of its public water supply from any incident resulting in water contamination arising from contaminated soils being dumped in the watershed, and

Whereas community comment arising from the recent public meeting held by the Regional District on July 12, 2012 clearly indicated extensive concern for the security of the Shawnigan public water supply and the lack of support for taking additional risks, and

Whereas the Minister of Environment has acknowledged the seriousness of the contaminated soil dumping issue in his commitment to working collaboratively with the CVRD to address the issue of managing the movement of contaminated soils into the Regional District to ensure the safety of community water supplies,

Be it resolved that the Cowichan Valley Regional District indicate to the Provincial Government that it is strongly opposed to the deliberate permitting of the use of contaminated soil for land or mine reclamation or other purposes within the public domestic water supply watersheds of the region, including specifically the watershed of the Shawnigan Community, and

Be it further resolved that the CVRD indicate to the Ministry of Environment that it is opposed to the granting of a waste management permit to South Island Aggregates for the use of contaminated soil in the reclamation of their Stebbings Road Quarry lying within the provincially designated Shawnigan Community Watershed, and

Be it further resolved that the CVRD prepare the necessary by-law to prohibit dumping of contaminated soil or waste in a designated community watershed that lies within the Regional District, and

Be it further resolved that the collaborative working relationship between the CVRD and the Ministry of Environment be employed to determine how the CVRD by-laws and the provincial contaminated soil regulations can be harmonized to prevent future risks to community domestic water supplies within the Region.