



**REPORT TO ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY 28 MARCH 2012**

**SUBJECT CONVENING FOR ACTION ON VANCOUVER ISLAND – INTER-REGIONAL
EDUCATION INITIATIVE AROUND WATERSHED PROTECTION**

ISSUE

Convening for Action on Vancouver Island (CAVI) is asking the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board to support their Inter-Regional Education Initiative and application for a grant to fund the initiative.

BACKGROUND

Under CAVI, the Partnership for Water Sustainability in British Columbia (PWSBC) is working to bring together four regional districts on Vancouver Island (Capital, Cowichan Valley, Nanaimo and Comox Valley) to align their efforts and advance an Inter-Regional Education Initiative. The initiative contains watershed-based strategies and programs for watershed protection.

PWSBC-CAVI is requesting CRD Board support of the Inter-Regional Education Initiative and support for an application by Comox Valley Regional District for a Gas Tax Capacity-Building Grant to fund the initiative (letter and briefing document attached as Appendix A). Supporting this application will not inhibit the CRD's Gas Tax Grant application opportunities.

ALTERNATIVES

1. That the Environmental Sustainability Committee recommend to the Board that it support the Inter-Regional Education Initiative proposed by Convening for Action on Vancouver Island and the Gas Tax Fund Capacity-Building Grant application by the Comox Valley Regional District to fund the initiative.
2. That the Environmental Sustainability Committee not support the Inter-Regional Education Initiative proposed by Convening for Action on Vancouver Island or the Gas Tax Fund Capacity-Building Grant application by the Comox Valley Regional District to fund the initiative.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This PWSBC-CAVI initiative will support and enhance delivery of work that is already budgeted in the 2012 Stormwater Quality program budgets and work that will be incorporated in the 2013 program budgets.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The CRD Stormwater, Harbours and Watersheds Program (SHWP) is currently implementing a two-year Integrated Watershed Management Strategy in the core area and provides watershed protection and/or monitoring services to four other municipalities and the three electoral areas. Partnering with PWSBC-CAVI will provide opportunities for SHWP to better deliver on commitments such as hosting watershed protection workshops for municipal staff and organizing a workshop on the development of watershed health indicators.

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CRD staff have worked cooperatively with CAVI since 2008 by participating in and hosting watershed protection workshops. The Bowker Creek Blueprint, work coordinated by CRD staff, is part of the CAVI course on developing Integrated Stormwater Management Plans. Through this new initiative, there is a new opportunity to partner with CAVI and other island regional districts to advance aspects of existing watershed management workplans at no additional cost to the CRD. The CRD's commitment under this initiative would be to hold up to four "learning and sharing" events over the next two years—workshops that fit this description were already included in SHWP workplans.

Support of the PWSBC-CAVI initiative enables CRD participation in a coordinated inter-regional information sharing process. Local governments will benefit from the information sharing between four Vancouver Island regional districts, learn from the experiences of the other regional districts and be able to participate in workshops delivered locally and elsewhere on Vancouver Island.

CONCLUSIONS

Under CAVI, the PWSBC has requested that the CRD Board support its Inter-Regional Education Initiative and the application by Comox Valley Regional District to fund the initiative through a Gas Tax Capacity-Building Grant. Supporting this application will not inhibit the CRD's Gas Tax Grant application opportunities.

CRD staff already participate in projects with CAVI and through this new partnership look to improve relationships with other island districts. The project initiatives will enhance existing work plan commitments and provide more effective delivery of services at no additional cost.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Environmental Sustainability Committee recommend to the Board that it support the Inter-Regional Education Initiative proposed by Convening for Action on Vancouver Island and the Gas Tax Fund Capacity-Building Grant application by the Comox Valley Regional District to fund the initiative.

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Attachment: 1