

January 23, 2019

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**TO THE CHAIR AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS
of the STRATHCONA REGIONAL DISTRICT**



As a resident of Cortes Island for almost 50 years and a property owner for nearly 40 years I am writing you because of my grave concerns about how you have handled our recent election and the Cortes Hall Tax issue. The hall tax should be a fairly simple procedure. About 20 communities up and down the Vancouver Island region have long since put their community halls on their land taxes in some form or another. Because of a small group of people ours has been shelved and delayed for almost 10 years. An over 2 to 1 majority voted for the non-binding referendum that you, the SRD board told us if a clear majority voted for would lead to a binding referendum quickly. Now we learn that once again you've delayed it to have more public consultation. We have sat through a number of public meetings where the same small minority have attempted, successfully more than once to disrupt and delay the hall tax and the community organizations that need this support. As the results of the non-binding referendum and a number of community club motions have shown that we want to support our halls by taxation., Why is the SRD allowing a very vocal minority to override the wishes of the Cortes community?

It has come to our attention that Director Leigh, regional director for Oyster River has been accepting emails from this group and not putting them into the public record or passing them on to Director Anderson, our legally elected Regional Director. Is it standard procedure at the SRD to allow this?

That you have decided again to indefinitely delay this bylaw is just plain wrong. Director Abrams was quoted in the Campbell River Mirror "I don't know why we are so intent on doing them (the 2 bylaws) now". How about because we have been trying to get this done (the hall tax) for nearly 10 years. Director Leigh says in that article that she had heard from Cortes residents via email "I don't think it's fair to people, to the taxpayers. I think they should have the opportunity." Is it standard SRD practice to allow back door communication? These taxpayers have had ample opportunity to express their opinions. Years of letter writing, disrupting community meetings and stating their positions and now a legal non-binding referendum that they lost by a better than 2 to 1 margin. Does Director Leigh and the SRD not believe in democracy? Majority rule? Why are you so willing to discard my vote?

As shown by the lawsuit started by 14 of the people opposed to the wishes of the greater Cortes community this group will stop at nothing to get their way, including having our duly elected Director removed from office. In spite of what Director Leigh had to say the people it's not fair to are the overwhelming majority of Cortes residents. Over 200 people in 36 hours signed a open letter to our community about this. Noba won the election by a significant margin. Cortes voted more than 2 to 1 in favour of a Hall Tax and First Responders bylaw. Why is the SRD blocking the results of a fair election run by.....the SRD? It is past time for you to listen to the voters and instead of delaying you need to be fast tracking those two bylaws.

I would appreciate a reply answering these questions and opinions.

Thank you for your time,
Howard Roman
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This letter (and all letters) should be entered into the public record