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To the Chair and Board of Directors of the Strathcona Regional District,

We have been following the extraordinary situation on Cortes Island in which 14 people have petitioned the Regional District (SRD) to have our legitimately and democratically elected Regional Director (RD), Noba Anderson, **removed from her position** for taking bribes and delivering kickbacks to some constituents. The allegations in the petition reference the fact that some concerned neighbours and friends came together to offer a small amount of financial help (\$100 or less pp to a total of \$2700) to her elderly father after a fire destroyed his cabin and he needed a new home. There is a longstanding history on Cortes of Islanders helping one another in this way....it is one of the great blessings of living on this Island, and certainly no criminal intent was present.

It stretches credulity that the petitioners accuse the RD of "taking money from her constituents for personal gain" and at the same time accuse the contributing friends and neighbours of seeking personal benefit or advantage in return. The alleged benefit relates to the fact that some of these folks happen to sit on boards of Island organizations which received grant-in-aid funds. REALLY?? Having sat on several of the boards named in the petition during our 30+ years on Cortes, often in the position of treasurer or accountant, I know first hand that the only personal benefit these folks get in return for days and weeks of dedicated work is personal satisfaction for serving the community.

When we first read about the petition, we felt that it was mean-spirited and inappropriate, but we could not imagine that it would be taken seriously by the SRD. When we realized that it has led to defamation in newspaper articles in the larger community, RCMP interviews and an investigation of criminal offenses, our reaction turned to anger.

We believe the allegations to be an attempt to undo the results of a fair and democratic election—an attempt by a few disgruntled citizens who did not get the election result they wanted. We believe that they may be the same people who have been actively trying to block a hall tax referendum which a large majority of Cortes Islanders voted in favour of, and which was perhaps a motivating factor in the drafting of the petition. It is likely that some of the same people may have been behind allegations of voter fraud during the recent election, and that they may have tried to block the efforts of our RD to move forward with her Cortes agenda by appealing to directors from other areas to block her.

We firmly believe that we cannot allow a small group to undermine our democratic process and social fabric. We believe in accepting the results of fair elections and we believe in community unity, even when we don't all share the same opinions. We live on Cortes because of the underlying respect and care all residents have for each other...we believe that we cannot allow a few misguided citizens to destroy that. We ask therefore that the SRD Board carefully examine the facts and respond immediately to all Cortes residents, clarifying the steps the SRD will take to right the wrong that has been done here, and that legal costs incurred by the RD to defend herself be covered by the SRD. We also respectfully request a personal reply to this letter.

Yours sincerely,

Carol and Steve London