



# Protect the Salish Sea—**VOTE FOR CHANGE** WHEN IS ENOUGH – ENOUGH?

It is disturbing that Bill Veenhof, our current Area H Director has consistently ignored majority community opinion. This is the man who touts in the PQB news “I have a very strong relationship with the community” and “a solid environmental record”. We don’t think so!

From the top down it seems that the RDN is very much out of touch with their “2016-2020 Strategic Priorities and Governing Principals” and here is why:

<p><i>Was Strategic Priority / Governing Principal fulfilled?</i> YES ✓ NO <b>X</b></p>	<p><b>Facts</b></p>
<p><i>“We will have a strong focus on protecting and enhancing our environment in all decisions.”</i> <b>X</b></p>	<p>Lack of green space standards for cluster developments, no inter-cluster rural community spacing rules, approval of archaic ocean sewage effluent disposal, no municipal water recycling, poor consultation with environmental impact community, lack of coordinated future sewer plans for Area H, <b>reduction of beach-side <u>No Development Zone</u> from 30m to 15m endangering fisheries habitat across the RDN.</b></p>
<p><i>“Respect the Environment-recognition of and protection for the natural environment underlies our decisions.”</i> <b>X</b></p>	<p>2.5km <b>sewage effluent pipeline crossing two salmon streams</b>, adding pollution to a clean area of the Salish Sea with poorly treated <b>effluent containing significant levels of viable pathogens and emerging contaminants</b> such as viruses, bacteria, and parasites, micro-plastics and drugs known to degrade marine ecosystems and <b>risk human health</b> (see Dr. Carlow submission to BC and Canadian Health and Environment Ministers, Sept. 2018 at <a href="http://SOSBowser.ca">SOSBowser.ca</a>).</p>
<p><i>“We see eco-tourism as a key economic opportunity in our region.”</i> <b>X</b></p>	<p><b>Building an open-pit sewage plant</b> next to Bowser Center businesses and a new Seniors' Center, dumping poorly treated pathogen loaded effluent (e.g. Norovirus and Vibrio bacteria), next to popular tourist beaches with a 1 meter square outfall warning sign does not promote tourism or water based recreation!</p>
<p><i>“We recognize the importance of agriculture and aquaculture in our region.”</i> <b>X</b></p>	<p><b>Planned Low Level secondary sewage treatment that does not sterilize known pathogens.</b> The European Food Safety Authority says releasing fecal contaminated effluent into shellfish areas (like ours), is high risk and should not be permitted. Land based disposal would avoid adding to Shellfish Industry and Human Health impacts.</p>

## A Sad Year:

- In the summer of 2017, a small 'carefully designed boundary' in the Village of Bowser was identified to allow only a small group to vote on a major issue that effects the larger community, particularly the impact community where a sewage effluent will be routed. **Only 67 people of over 1,700 Bowser residents voted in favor of the plan.** Mr. Veenhof said “I cannot ignore the democratic will of the Bowser Village Centre residents”. Wow, logic and fairness were not part of this decision and it has caused the community to be deeply divided. **What kind of a leader would do that?**



- A 644 person petition to the Board and 200 road signs firmly opposing a Sewage System with a marine effluent disposal option were both ignored!

- Multiple delegation presentations were made to the Board at RDN meetings to share highly credible science-based evidence and engineering reports to request that the RDN change to feasible INNOVATIVE ALTERNATIVE land-based sewage effluent disposal. Mr. Veenhof promised to give these plans real consideration but never did. Is this environmentally responsible leadership? Why pollute the sea if there are many modern green options?
- One of the most undemocratic examples of Veenhof's leadership was his seemingly callous disregard for Area H wishes following a July 9th Bowser Sewage Plant rezoning hearing (which he chaired). More than 200 angry residents spoke out against the rezoning and provided close to 100 written statements that said "NO" to an archaic sewage plant design with a marine outfall. If legal hearings are designed to allow the community to have a voice, why would Mr. Veenhof ever think that ignoring the will of the people could be considered responsible or ethical?
- Following the hearing results and during the third reading of the sewer plant rezoning bylaw, a fellow Director said that he could not vote in favor of the bylaw because to do so would make the RDN akin "to a dictatorship". Shamefully, in the face of overwhelming public opinion and outrage, at a "specially called Board meeting" on September 5<sup>th</sup>, Veenhof yet again ignored the wishes of the people and voted YES to proceed with rezoning to enable the sewage plant to be constructed.
- Since the beginning of this project the consultation process was flawed. The RDN has been barreling ahead and aggressively exercising its full power under the BC Local Government Act to force this project through under the wire. The management of this project is likely now more than two years behind schedule, but to be eligible for collecting time limited Federal and Provincial CLEAN WATER AND WASTEWATER GRANT MONEY, it needs to be built as soon as possible. It's all about nailing down the grant money (about \$70,000 tax dollars per hook up). Once that pipe is in the water and with Veenhof's subsequent densification plans for the Bowser area, poorly treated effluent volumes will grow, add to environmental and health problems, and there will be no turning back.

The Salish Sea near Bowser is one of the few remaining down-Island areas that has not been closed to shellfish harvesting by DFO. Coincidentally, it does not have an RDN style sewage outfall such as Nanoose, French Creek, Duke Point and Greater Nanaimo.

On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, without credible scientific evidence, Veenhof said that failing septic systems are one of the main sources of fecal contamination of the Salish Sea near Bowser. This is how RDN justifies marine disposal! Think about that. They have not done their homework!

The upcoming election will be one of the most important for the future of our area and marine ecosystem health. ENOUGH is ENOUGH! If these are examples of 'Sustainable Development Leadership' then we just can't afford another four years!

It's time for a new Director with new ideas, new thinking and a new approach. On October 20  Vote For Change!