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Big costs in delays to treatment plan

As chairwoman of the Capital Regional District's wastewater committee, I am certain our region is on track for the creation of a leading-edge wastewater treatment system. We are engaged in sincere public consultation and are choosing innovative resource recovery techniques. We will work to ensure the protection of marine and terrestrial environment. We are committed to fiscal responsibility and our goal is to deliver this project for less than \$1 billion.

We are fortunate to have verbal funding commitments from the provincial and federal governments. Facilities can be built with respect for our environment, at a sensible cost and using the suggestions and input from the local community.

Six years ago, the federal government began the process of creating a set of Canadian wastewater treatment regulations. The Canadian council of environment ministers regulations represent a national consensus on the need to treat wastewater effluent. These will be imposed across the country; municipalities will need to be compliant by 2020 or, potentially, face large fines.

The treatment project will make the CRD compliant with these new regulations. We are poised to be national leaders in wastewater treatment technology; hesitating will cost us money through failing to comply and could also result in the loss of critical funding.

Federal funding for the wastewater project will not be available indefinitely. We must work to maintain strong support for this project in Ottawa through a finalization of our funding proposal. As well, federal funding is contingent on provincial cost sharing. That means that we must also work to secure a clear commitment from the province. With or without funding, we will have to meet the new federal regulations for wastewater treatment. This is why it is so critical to secure written financial commitments from senior governments.

National wastewater regulations mean that there is no turning back. We need residents' input during this pivotal time. Judy Brownoff Saanich councillor

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