

From: Veins of Life Watershed Society [REDACTED]

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To: letters@timescolonist.com

Cc: Council <Council@esquimalt.ca>; mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca; mayorandcouncil@viewroyal.ca; Mayor Dean Murdock <mayor@saanich.ca>; council@saanich.ca; administration@oakbay.ca

Subject: Re: 2026 Budgets: Fix the Rotten Sewers Now — Stop Dumping This Disaster on Our Kids

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10K Gorge Waterway Swim • Saturday, Aug 12 • 3:30 PM • Corporate Challenge 4 PM

Start Kinsmen Gorge Park • Finish Ship's Point, Inner Harbour • \$10,000 prize money to win!

World Championship Open Water Swimming Trials • The first Gorge Swim Festival in 65 years

For further information or to volunteer with the events, please call PacificSport National Sport Centre at 250 744-3583, ext 77



Op-eds on our rotten sewer systems

Subject: 2026 Budgets: Fix the Rotten Sewers Now — Stop Dumping This Disaster on Our Kids

Mayor Alto, Mayor Desjardins, Mayor Murdock, Mayor Tobias, and Councils of Victoria, Esquimalt, Saanich, View Royal, and Oak Bay:

Here we go again.

Another municipal budget season filled with the same careful phrases: “*aging infrastructure*,” “*long-term planning*,” “*future investment*.”

Meanwhile, the same rotten sewer and stormwater systems keep leaking, discharging, and contaminating the Gorge Waterway and Victoria Harbour.

This debate has been dragging on since the mid-20th century. It’s now 2026.

The pipes are still failing. The outfalls are still dumping. The contamination is still building.

At some point, this stops being “*aging infrastructure*.”

It becomes willful neglect.

Stormwater Isn’t Rain — It’s Pollution Delivery

Stormwater is not harmless runoff. It’s a delivery system for metals, oil and PAHs, fecal contamination, PCBs, and endocrine-disrupting chemicals flowing straight into the nearshore — exactly where the Salish Sea food web begins.

No clean intertidal habitat means no sand lance.

No sand lance means no chinook salmon.

No chinook means Southern Resident orcas starve.

Stormwater is not a side issue. It is the chain of survival.

Regional monitoring continues to document contaminant concerns across municipal storm networks even as utility costs rise for residents.

Municipalities Are Regulated Polluters — Not Bystanders

Let’s stop pretending this is optional.

Municipal governments are not simply “service providers.” Under federal law, they are regulated polluters.

The Fisheries Act prohibits the deposit of deleterious substances into waters frequented by fish. That applies whether the source is private industry or a city storm outfall.

CEPA is equally clear: pollution prevention is a legal duty, not a slogan.

Leaking sewers, cross-connections, untreated storm outfalls, contaminated sediments —

these are not unfortunate side effects. They are compliance failures.

Councils Must Stop Passing the Bill Forward

Every time municipalities delay replacement, they are not saving money.

They are handing a bigger bill — and a dirtier harbour — to the next generation.

Victoria's 2026–2030 budget decisions are already underway.

Esquimalt residents face major increases while storm and sewer costs remain bundled without transparent utility accountability.

Saanich continues talking in decades — 20-year horizons — as if fish habitat has that kind of time.

Oak Bay openly admits many assets are past useful life and due for replacement now.

And View Royal does not get a pass because it's smaller. Pollution does not stop at municipal boundaries. A broken line upstream becomes contamination downstream.

The fish don't care whose logo is stamped on the pipe.

Neither do federal regulators.

The Question for Each Mayor and Council Is Simple

So this is the question for:

- Mayor Marianne Alto and Victoria Council
- Mayor Barb Desjardins and Esquimalt Council
- Mayor Dean Murdock and Saanich Council
- Mayor Sid Tobias and View Royal Council
- Oak Bay Council

What exactly are you leaving behind?

Another round of “strategic plans” and “future studies,” while pipes installed before most residents were born continue leaking into fish habitat?

Another budget that quietly passes the real costs forward — onto our children, onto taxpayers in 2040, onto an ecosystem that cannot wait?

The Gorge and Victoria Harbour are not sacrifice zones for deferred maintenance.

If 2026 budgets do not fund real pipe replacement, real stormwater source control staffing, and real enforcement — not slogans — then councils should stop pretending they are managing infrastructure.

They are simply managing decline.

And the next generation will inherit your neglect in the form of contaminated sediments,

failing habitat, and an orca population running out of time.

Eighty years is long enough.

Fix the pipes now — while there is still something left to save.

Sincerely,

John R Roe

Veins of Life Watershed Society (VOLWS)

Victoria, BC

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John R Roe

- Office 250 383 2086
- [The Dead Boats Disposal Society](#)
- [www.salishsea.ca](#)
- "Over 30 years of cleanup and restoration have taught me one truth—if you don't stop the pollution at its source, you're just sweeping sand in a windstorm. Source control, source control, source control. Then, and only then, do you restore."
— JR Roe. Amen
- oshaku shushaku—mistake upon mistake compounds to become the sum total of one's knowledge.

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Canada stays strong by standing united—defending democracy, rejecting division, and leading with truth, justice, and integrity. We fight tyranny with resilience, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to a better future. Proverbs 14:23 "in all labor there is profit, but mere talk tends only to loss".

Postal Code S0A L1S

S0A → "Salish Sea, Area 0"

L1S → "Lowly Sand lance,