

From: [Barb Desjardins](#)
To: [Corporate Services](#)
Subject: Fwd: Religious Neutrality Day Proclamation
Date: February-14-25 6:54:22 AM

Barbara Desjardins, (She/Her)

Mayor

Township of Esquimalt | Council

Tel: 1-250-883-1944 | www.esquimalt.ca

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Begin forwarded message:

From: Lonnis McElroy [REDACTED]
Date: February 13, 2025 at 8:22:36 PM PST
To: Barb Desjardins <Barbara.Desjardins@esquimalt.ca>
Subject: Religious Neutrality Day Proclamation
Reply-To: [REDACTED]

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Dear Barbara Desjardins,

I am a resident of Esquimalt and am asking the council to proclaim April 15, 2025, as "Religious Neutrality Day." This date marks the tenth anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court of Canada decision in *Mouvement laïque québécois v. Saguenay (City)*, 2015 2 S.C.R. 3.

The decision in *MLQ v. Saguenay* found prayers at municipal council meetings to be an unconstitutional breach of the state's duty of religious neutrality. This was a significant moment in Canadian history: It affirmed the principle of religious neutrality in public institutions and the importance of maintaining a secular space where individuals of all faiths and beliefs can coexist. By recognizing this anniversary, we celebrate our commitment to upholding the values of equality, diversity, and respect for all citizens.

Proclaiming April 15 as "Religious Neutrality Day" serves as a reminder of our dedication to these fundamental principles and promotes awareness and understanding among our community members. It also provides an opportunity for education and discussions on the importance of religious neutrality in fostering a harmonious and inclusive society.

I kindly request that the City Council consider this proposal and take the necessary steps to proclaim April 15, 2025, as "Religious Neutrality Day." I have included a sample proclamation below.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Lonnis McElroy

863 Wollaston Street, Esquimalt, BC, CA, V9A 5A9

Whereas, April 15, 2025, marks the tenth anniversary of the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in *Mouvement laïque québécois v. Saguenay (City)*, 2015 2 S.C.R. 3, which affirmed the principle of religious neutrality in public institutions; and

Whereas, the decision underscored the importance of maintaining a secular space where individuals of all faiths and beliefs can coexist in harmony and mutual respect; and

Whereas, the Esquimalt is committed to upholding the values of equality, diversity, and respect for all citizens, regardless of their religious beliefs or non-beliefs; and

Whereas, recognizing "Religious Neutrality Day" provides an opportunity for our community to reflect on the importance of religious neutrality and to promote awareness and understanding among all residents; and

Whereas, this day serves as a reminder of our dedication to fostering a harmonious and inclusive society where everyone feels welcome and respected;

Now, Therefore, as Mayor of Esquimalt, I do hereby proclaim April 15, 2025, as **Religious Neutrality Day** in the Esquimalt, and encourage all residents to join in commemorating this important milestone and to participate in educational events and discussions on the significance of religious neutrality in our society.