

DELEGATION

APPLICATION TO APPEAR AS A DELEGATION BEFORE COUNCIL

An individual or a delegation may address Council on the subject of an Agenda item, each limited to **5 minutes**.

Please submit the completed application **by Noon on Wednesday prior to the preferred Council meeting**, by: (1) email to corporate.services@esquimalt.ca, (2), mail or hand deliver to Municipal Hall, address above, or (3) fax to 250-414-7111. For further information, contact the Corporate Officer at 250-414-7135 or corporate.services@esquimalt.ca.

Name(s): Bruce Gibbons

Organization (if applicable): Merville Water Guardians

Daytime Phone No.:

Email:

Preferred Date of Council meeting: Feb 25, 2019
(Staff will telephone or email to confirm the meeting date once it is scheduled.)

Reasons for Wishing to Appear as a Delegation (Please Specify): To request that Council revise Township of Esquimalt zoning bylaws to prohibit the bottling of groundwater as a permitted use.

Feb. 8, 2019
Date of Application


Signature

Date Received:

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Presented to Council:

CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT		
For Information:		
<input type="checkbox"/> CAO	<input type="checkbox"/> Mayor/Council	
<input type="checkbox"/>		
RECEIVED: FEB 15 2019		
Referred: <u>ANJA</u>		
<input type="checkbox"/> For Action	<input type="checkbox"/> For Response	<input type="checkbox"/> COTW
<input type="checkbox"/> For Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council Agenda	<input type="checkbox"/> IC

APPLICANT CONTACTED
DATE: Feb 15/19
INITIALS: BG

Presentation to Township of Esquimalt

Feb. 6, 2019

Madam Mayor, Councillors and staff of the Township of Esquimalt

Request to change the zoning bylaws of the Township of Esquimalt to prohibit the bottling of groundwater for commercial sale or bulk export

My name is Bruce Gibbons, and I live in Merville. I am here to address council about the issue of protecting groundwater on Vancouver Island and all over British Columbia. In November of 2017, the Government approved a groundwater extraction licence for a resident of Merville to bottle and sell water from the Comox Valley aquifer. We successfully campaigned for the CVRD to deny the rezoning necessary to bottle the water on site. Therefore, the current licence does not allow the applicant to utilize his licence and bottle water on his property. However, his water extraction licence is still valid so I have been campaigning to prevent him from trucking the water to a site that allows bottling of groundwater. I am approaching AVICC communities asking them to revise their bylaws to prevent bottling of groundwater by any water licence holder.

I filed an appeal against the water licence last March, but after a lengthy battle with the FLNRO Ministry, the Environmental Appeal Board dismissed the appeal, stating that I did not have standing to appeal. That exposed a serious flaw in the Water Sustainability Act that denies appeal of a water licence unless the licence physically detrimentally affects your land, not your water, or your access to water. The Water Sustainability Act does not protect my water or my access to water. I find that appalling. We have approximately 1,200 signatures to date on a petition to the Government asking them to stop approving licences to bottle and sell groundwater. We also have an online petition with 1,330 signatures to date.

If BC's aquifers are depleted then the thousands of residents and farmers who rely on them will not be able to look after their personal needs for drinking water, sanitation, growing their backyard gardens or growing their crops and raising their livestock. That would put our food security at risk. Without water, farmers cannot produce our food, and as we have seen with the severe drought in California, we will not be able to continue to rely on importing our food from that source. Without water, there is no life. We are facing population growth that will put more demand on the aquifers and we are already seeing the negative effects of climate change impact the quality and quantity of water in the summer drought period. We experienced level 4 drought all over Vancouver Island this past summer. Residents and farmers were told to conserve water, yet corporations with provincial water licences are allowed to continue pumping and generating huge profits from the aquifers we all rely on despite the level 4 drought. There is not enough information known about our aquifers to risk bottling and selling any of the water. Climate change is causing extended periods of serious drought, putting rivers, streams, fish habitat and fish stocks at risk. And it is causing sources of recharge for the aquifers to disappear evidenced by receding glaciers and diminishing snowpacks.

There is an existing, real threat to the groundwater of Vancouver Island. We asked the CVRD to amend their bylaws to prohibit the bottling of water. That bylaw revision is in process. I asked the Village of Cumberland to prohibit water bottling, and the Village has since changed their zoning bylaws to prohibit bottling of groundwater. I asked the City of Courtenay to prohibit bottling of groundwater in their zoning bylaws. Courtenay Council passed a motion to prohibit the bottling of

groundwater. And I just recently asked the Town of Comox to revise their bylaws to prohibit water bottling. In September I contacted the Strathcona Regional District (SRD), since the Merville water licence holder had stated that he may approach them in an attempt to bottle his water in their region. The SRD took immediate steps to prevent the water bottling and on Jan 24th the SRD also passed a resolution to be presented to the AVICC and the UBCM asking the provincial government to cease approval of licences for bottling of groundwater for commercial sale or bulk export. I am now in the process of contacting AVICC member communities asking them to revise their bylaws to prohibit bottling of groundwater, and to support the SRD Resolution.

I have 2 requests for the Township of Esquimalt.

- 1) that you consider taking the necessary steps to implement a bylaw that prohibits bottling of groundwater in any of your zoning, to help protect our groundwater today and for our children and grandchildren and great grandchildren in the future.
- 2) I also ask that the Township of Esquimalt support the Strathcona Regional District resolution at the April AVICC convention, to ask the Provincial Government to cease the approval of licences for commercial extraction of groundwater resources for bottling or bulk water sales.

We cannot allow water bottling from our aquifers based on theory and calculations. The consequences of being wrong could be catastrophic. I would sincerely appreciate the support of the Township of Esquimalt in protecting the above ground uses of our groundwater by preventing anyone from bottling and selling water from any aquifer in BC. Water is our most precious resource. Water is life. We must do everything we can to protect and conserve it. Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Bruce Gibbons

Merville Water Guardians

Merville, BC V0R2M0