



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF VERNON

1400 - 80TH STREET - VERNON, BRITISH COLUMBIA V1T 2K4  
TELEPHONE (250) 545-1367 FAX (250) 545-4048

File: 0220-01

February 24, 2020

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Sustainable Environment Network Society  
3300 37 Avenue  
Vernon, BC V1T 2Y5

Dear Ms. Thors:

**RE: Discharge into Okanagan Lake**

Thank you for your letter received February 18, 2020, regarding the discharge of treated reclaimed water from the Vernon Water Reclamation Centre (VWRC) to Okanagan Lake.

In your letter, you've asked whether the City of Vernon has considered redirecting the flow of treated reclaimed water from the VWRC to Goose Lake for the purpose of irrigating agricultural land along Old Kamloops Road and the Bella Vista area.

Goose Lake is an open reservoir within the Greater Vernon Water (GVW) distribution system. Water from Goose Lake is used for irrigating a variety of cash crops, such as vineyards, orchards and root crops.

The option to divert treated reclaimed water to Goose Lake has previously been considered but is not available at this time.

The infrastructure to pump treated reclaimed water from the VWRC distribution system to Goose Lake does not currently exist. Current infrastructure – including that which goes from the VWRC to The Rise golf course – would require significant capacity upgrades. Further, new pipes would have to be constructed to connect the VWRC system to Goose Lake. Pumping treated reclaimed water to Goose Lake would incur significant electricity costs and would impact the City's annual operating budget.

Blending or integrating reclaimed water into the Goose Lake agricultural supply would also require:

- a change in Provincial legislation for the use of reclaimed water on crops; or
- agricultural landowners drawing water from Goose Lake to use only trickle or drip irrigation methods on their crops (as per regulations in the B.C. Sprinkler Irrigation Manual).

The City of Vernon must strictly adhere to its Operating Certificate issued by the Ministry of Environment and the stringent parameters established for the quality, use and discharge of reclaimed water.

The Vernon spray irrigation program has been in operation for more than 40 years to provide benefit to local agricultural lands (used for grazing and hay production, seed orchards, a seedling nursery and tree plantations). The City is proud of this program and the water quality at the VVRC.

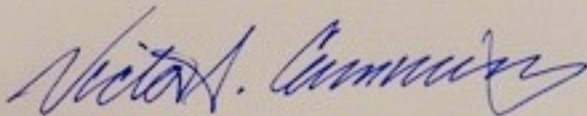
It is important to place this water quality in perspective. For example, the City's Operating Certificate states: "the faecal coliform level for reclaimed water discharged to Okanagan Lake via the deep lake outfall is not to exceed 50 CFU (or MPN)/100mL." At present, the reclaimed water being discharged from the VVRC is less than 3 CFU (or MPN)/100mL. This is well below the Provincial limit. This is also well below comparable, though not identical standards, which apply to full contact recreational water (beach) use.

The City of Vernon, under its Reclaimed Water Use Policy, "is committed to the concept of beneficial reuse of reclaimed water where it is technically and economically feasible" and shall operate a reclaimed water irrigation program, which complies with the City's Operating Certificate from the Ministry of Environment and all other relevant provincial and federal regulations.

The City has requested a temporary release of treated reclaimed water to Okanagan Lake via the deep lake outfall to draw down the level of MacKay Reservoir to a more manageable level. Immediate action is required due to the current level of MacKay Reservoir. Administration is actively working with the Ministry of Environment to determine when the discharge will end.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to the City of Vernon.

Sincerely,



Victor I. Cumming  
Mayor

pc: Council  
W. Pearce, CAO  
P. Bridal, Deputy CAO, Dir. Corporate Services  
S. Koenig, Dir. Operation Services