

Flushing our sewage is far from an ideal situation

By Victoria News

Published: **October 11, 2012 11:00 AM**

Updated: **October 11, 2012 11:2411 AM**

I heard former environment minister David Anderson say recently that dumping Victoria's sewage into the Strait of Juan de Fuca was "as effective as artificial land-based sewage treatment."

How can any intelligent human believe such a statement? According to Capital Regional District numbers, outfalls at Clover Point and Macaulay Point handle the effluent from 330,000 people daily, many of whom use personal-care products, laundry products, medicines and more, all contributing to a chemical stew being discharged into the local environment.

Stores throughout the region sell over-the-counter medicines, household cleansers, mouthwashes, hair dyes, bleaches and similar products every day.

Additionally, many area residents use prescription drugs, virtually all of which pass through their bodies and are excreted into the waste stream.

Anyone can read the warning labels on any of these products, and understand they pose a threat to the environment if not handled carefully. Even toothpaste is toxic, with labels warning users not to ingest the product. But almost all of the areas' 330,000 residents flush this down the drains, every day.

Anderson and the Association for Responsible, Ethical and Sustainable Sewage Treatment say "source control" is their answer to the concerns about these chemical contaminants.

Does he really think Victoria's residents will stop washing their clothes, cleaning their houses, or stop taking their medicines?

Many scientific studies have been done that show these chemicals are damaging the worlds' environment.

Anderson says the conditions of the Strait of Juan de Fuca are somehow "different," yet virtually all communities along the Strait currently have sewage treatment, except Victoria.

Even little communities like Sooke, Sidney, Salt Spring Island, Friday Harbour, Port Townsend and Sequim have sewage treatment.

If these communities all have funded and built sewage treatment, why can't affluent Victoria, the Provincial Capital? Anderson tells the public an "exemption" is possible. With virtually every other nearby community already treating its sewage, what will Victoria state as its "special" circumstances, warranting its ability to continue to pollute the areas' environment all others are spending so much to clean up?

Modern sewage treatment facilities remove 98 per cent of the chemicals of concern. Screening raw sewage before dumping it into the environment removes none of them.

It is sad to see Anderson and others deceive the public in their efforts to achieve their political goals.

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