



TOWN OF GIBSONS

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To the residents of Gibsons,

As we begin each New Year, it is natural to reflect on the past 12 months – and to ask ourselves how we might do better going forward. How can we best prepare for the future? What concrete actions will move us closer to our long-term goals?

One future eventuality local governments must consider is the closure of the Sechelt Landfill, which is anticipated to reach capacity in the next 10 to 12 years. At that point, all users will face significant expenditures, beginning with an estimated \$5 million to safely decommission the site. After that, taxpayer costs would likely include building a new landfill (also a multi-million dollar project) or shipping our garbage off-Coast indefinitely (a deeply unsatisfying prospect.)

To help extend the life of the landfill, the Sunshine Coast Regional District is expected to implement a complete ban on recyclables, including all organic waste, in the next one to two years.

While this is clearly a necessary step, we know from a recently conducted survey that the majority of Gibsons residents are not currently positioned to eliminate 100% of food scraps from their garbage. Accordingly, Gibsons' Town Council recently decided to implement a universal weekly curbside organics collection program beginning in March. We will also move from weekly garbage pickup to bi-weekly pickup, partly in response to our finding that more than 70% of Gibsons residents fill only half their garbage can each week. Collected organics will be taken to Salish Soils, the state-of-the-art organics composting facility located in Sechelt, where it will ultimately become valuable, Grade "A" organic compost.

In undertaking this change, one of Council's prime goals was to make organics diversion as easy as possible for our residents. We believe the internationally proven curbside system proposed by Grayco Disposal (Gibsons' current garbage collection agency and the company that will administer the organics diversion program) achieves this objective, as it provides residents with all the tools they need to separate their food scraps in a clean, simple and cost-effective way. The system also eliminates the possibility of wildlife being attracted to the food waste, as the program's robust curbside containers, or "EcoCaddys", are kept secure (as with your regular garbage) until the day of pickup.

In total, this initiative is expected to reduce the waste our community sends to the Sechelt Landfill substantially, thereby helping to extend the site's lifespan. Additionally, because organics create methane as they break down, removing them from the landfill will also reduce the greenhouse gases we generate.

After the initial program set-up fee, the curbside organic pickup is expected to cost less than \$7 per residence per month. Compared to what it will cost us all when the Sechelt Landfill is

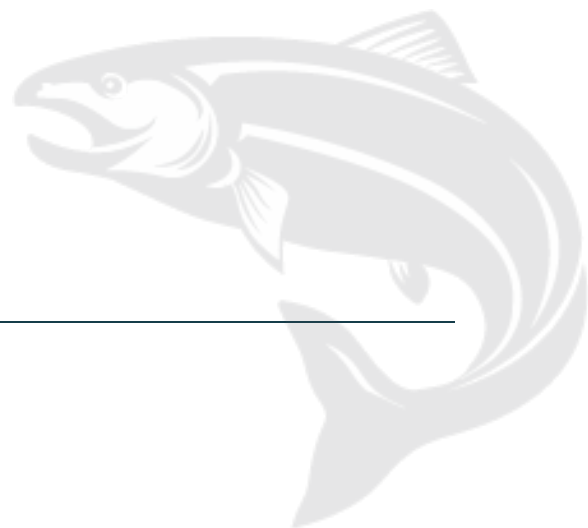
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"Nature is our most valuable asset"

exhausted, I believe it's a small price to pay to make immediate, measurable progress against one of our community's most urgent challenges.

Yours truly,

Mayor Wayne Rowe



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