

E-mail to the Minister

Honourable Shirley Bond
Minister of Transportation
Province of British Columbia
BOX 9055 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, B.C., V8W 9E2

16/04/2010

RE: 185645 - Texada Gravel on Gabriola Island

Dear Minister

It goes without saying that I am once again profoundly disappointed with your response. "Hard working staff" and "strict standards" are stuff for a response to a political question asked in Question Period in the Legislature where you can rely on the audience being unacquainted with the complex, technical, and multi-faceted details of the issue, but it is not a response to scientific studies, and conclusions based on those studies, that the experts in your Ministry appear to be unable to refute.

In principle, when I was approached by Gabriola Islanders to become involved in this issue, there were three possible approaches, namely political, technical, and legal. As a professional engineer, I naturally favoured the technical approach. Yet in all the correspondence in this file, not once has your Ministry even mentioned, yet alone discussed, the core "clay-carbonate" problem. I have attached a copy of a paper addressing engineering concerns, not because I want anyone to read it, please don't, it is not directly relevant, but as just one example of how carbonate in clay can significantly affect the engineering properties of material used in construction. There is a line in the abstract: "The present study shows that the carbonate content substantially influences the engineering behaviour of clayey material". There is not one mention of carbonate in your Ministry's "strict" standards nor is there one in the geotechnical report that was commissioned, this being because your staff did not request it, and this in spite of it having been brought to their attention in various geotechnical reports from Gabriolans.

I can only conclude that your refusal to deal with this issue on a technical basis has its roots in politics, an all the more distressing conclusion because it implicates your professional technical staff too. The interests of Emcon evidently override the interests of Gabriolans who have to put up with this messy unsatisfactory and damaging material, which is, as I say, if true, is a profoundly disappointing response from a government meant to serve the people.

Sincerely

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