CRD Sewage Treatment Q&A

That a better location can be found to integrate waste management. This is very unlikely. Currently, all municipal wastes are hauled to Hartland., where all wastes can be used in various resource recovery operations. Piping the sewage sludge to Hartland builds upon those opportunities. Creating different locations for different wastes will reduce the ability to efficiently utilize those wastes.

The current project does not maximize resource recovery. In fact, it does.

The system currently being pursued plans for anaerobic digesters to extract bio-gas. It also plans for the Ostara styled nutrient removal processes which remove ammonia and phosphorus, which are sold.

By piping the sludge to Hartland, a number of resource recovery opportunities are made available. Already, all systems have evolved to make Hartland the centralized location for the region's waste management. It is only logical that Hartland continue to build on that purpose, as the site for the yet-to-be-built waste-to-energy facility, utilizing plasma gasification technologies. With such a centralized waste processing centre, solid wastes from the region's garbage can be combined with the sewage sludge (after all other processing) to be used as a fuel source for the plasma gasification facility.

Regarding district heating, unless the community is willing to accept a large waste treatment facility in near proximity of residences and businesses, the distances make such opportunities difficult.

The project, built "on top of the existing collection system" is wrong approach.

Using as much of the existing infrastructure as possible reduces costs, construction impacts to neighbourhoods and businesses. The sewage still needs to get from individual residences to treatment facilities, regardless of technologies employed.

That a de-centralized system would be less costly and more advantageous than the current plan. This is not true. The smaller the volumes of wastes being handled, the smaller the volume of resources that can be recovered. For resources such as natural gas production, and biological waste heat for district heating, smaller processing facilities are not better.

That the current method of discharging wastes into the Strait causes no harm. This is not true. A study prepared for Environment Canada in 2002 by 2WE Associates Consulting, LTD, lists 5 pages of chemicals, pesticides, herbicides, metals, organophosphates, halogenated compounds, phthalates, PCBs, phenolics, ketones, PAHs and more found in Victoria's sewage.

Even small concentrations of one of the world's most consumed drug, Ibuprofen, damages fish reproduction.

That "source control" can adequately address chemical pollution found in Victoria's sewage. This is not true. "Source control" cannot be applied to the thousands of prescription and over-the-counter drugs area residents consume every day. According to a worldwide pharmaceutical-tracking company, Canadians consume an average of nearly 14 prescriptions per citizen, per year.

Household cleansers cannot be managed with "source control". There are many other such sources of chemical pollution one can list that "source control" cannot prevent from entering the Victoria sewage collection system..

That storm water impacts are more harmful to the environment than Victoria's daily untreated sewage discharges. This is not true. Whereas the impacts of storm water run-off do need to be addressed, and there are many "low-tech" decentralized approaches that the CRD already encourages (http://www.crd.bc.ca/watersheds/lid/garden.htm) storms large enough to cause significant run-off do not occur every day. The 129 million litres of untreated sewage IS discharged, every day of the year.

That the project is being rushed, resulting in poor decisions. This is not true. Minister Penner mandated treatment facilities for Victoria in 2006. Numerous meetings, studies, evaluations, public presentations, public comments, articles in the media, and more have transpired during the last 6 years. Hardly "rushed".

That "emerging technologies" utilizing Microbial fuel cells warrant a halt and redesign of the current project. This is not the case, as these fuel cells do nothing to address the problems of the remaining sludge. This being said, nothing prevents this emerging technology from being added to other resource recovery and treatment processing facilities in the future.

That the current project does nothing to address Climate Change concerns. It does.
The project captures the powerful greenhouse gas methane generated by the decomposing wastes from 330,000 area residents that currently is released into the environment uncontrolled.

That San Diego and Honolulu have exemptions allowing them to discharge untreated wastes. This is not true. Honolulu has no exemptions. San Diego has extensive sewage treatment facilities, many very similar to those planned for Victoria. (http://www.sandiego.gov/mwwd/facilities/ptloma/index.shtml) The "delay/exemption" issues have been addressed by the recent letter from the Federal government rejecting any delays or exemptions for Victoria's sewage treatment project.

That the cost of the project will make other projects difficult to undertake. This is not true. Over 16,000 communities across North America have built and operated sewage treatment facilities, and have been able to fund other projects, including major storm water management systems.

That cost/benefit studies have not been done to justify the sewage treatment project. Nor have these types of studies been done for most public works projects. "Public benefit" is assumed obvious.