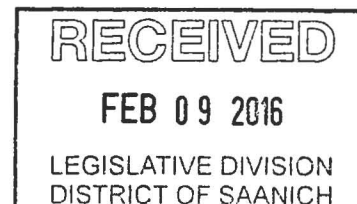




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Report

To: Mayor and Councillors
From: Councillor Judy Brownoff
Date: February 5, 2016
Subject: **Derelict or Abandoned Vessels – Resolution to AVICC
(Notice of Motion Presented January 25, 2016)**



There are various federal, provincial and municipal government departments and agencies dealing with some aspect of the issue of abandoned and derelict vessels. For example, the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) responds to incidents where pollution can be a threat to the marine environment and they recover their expenses to deal with that pollution from the Ship Source Oil Pollution Fund. The CCG does not have the authority to deal with the abandoned or derelict vessel itself.

Transport Canada's Navigable Waters Protection Program deals with wrecks that obstruct, impede or render more difficult or dangerous navigation. In addition, the Minister may authorize, under the *Navigable Waters Protection Act*, any person to take possession and remove a vessel if the vessel has been abandoned for two years. Finally, a Navigable Waters Protection Officer designated as a receiver of a wreck may dispose of or destroy a wreck, or authorize its disposition or destruction if requirements under the Act are met.

Recently a Private Member's Bill C-219 was introduced and given first reading in the House of Commons this bill designates the Canadian Coast Guard be designated as a receiver of wrecks which is placing "assumed onus" on the Coast Guard. Together with some wording changes which were raised during the previous introduction of a similar bill by then Honourable Jean Crowder, MP.

The cost of removal of a single vessel can be significant and variable. Saanich incurred additional costs of \$25,000 from two boats requiring removal from the Gorge Waterway and from Gyro Park, including the cleanup of needles that landed on the shores of Gyro Park Beach. Another boat has a 55 foot cement hull which will be expensive to dispose of due to the hull material. These vessels are broken up and disposed at Hartland Landfill. Further costs include over 200 hours of staff time costs for environmental assessments, contacting the Federal and Provincial authorities, trying to locate the owner, legal issues, salvage contract and much more. So far this season a total of \$50,000 has been expended, not including staff time.

In November 2012 Transport Canada released a study of the extent of abandoned and derelict vessels in Canada¹. The study found that "the analysis of the Large Vessel Register and the Small Vessel Register indicated that the age of a large portion of the fleet of the various registered vessels is 30 years or more. This fact could result in an increase in the number of vessels that will be abandoned, as well as the need to have access to an infrastructure that will be able to dispose of this increasing number of older vessels". One of the key recommendations was to look at "potential sources of funding to remove abandoned and derelict vessels, including short-term and long-term options".

The Province of BC has a good Product Stewardship Program that collects eco charges at time of purchase for a number of products. It is timely to establish an Abandoned and Derelict Vessels Program with potential funding sources that could include reasonable fees at time of vessel purchase, registration,

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insurance and moorage. The Program could be established so that local municipalities or waterfront property owners could apply for assistance in disposal or removal of abandoned vessels by a reputable and recognized contractor. Such programs exist in Washington and Oregon, to name a few.

With the magnitude of the age of the majority of vessels in Canadian waters being 30 years or older, there also needs to be a program established to ensure sustainable and environmental disposal of vessels. This should be coordinated with the local landfill operators and private sector. Several of these vessels end up sinking which could cause a number of environmental issues.

Finally it is important to recognize that with climate change we are seeing more severe storms with longer and more significant wind events. It is also important to recognize that a shortage of affordable housing in our region is leading to these older derelict vessels being used for housing for some members of our society. The environmental risks are very real and entirely predictable, and all levels of government should be involved.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the following resolution for consideration at the 2016 Convention of the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities:

ABANDONED AND DERELICT VESSELS PROGRAMS

District of Saanich

WHEREAS the November 2012 Transport Canada Study recommends the establishment of an inter-jurisdictional working group that would address and provide recommendations on issues related to abandoned and derelict vessels, including potential sources of funding to remove abandoned and derelict vessels;

AND WHEREAS the incidents of vessels left abandoned or derelict by owners through neglect or lack of financial resources to dispose of the vessel cause municipalities serious concerns for public safety and the potential harm to the environment and have a significant financial impact to taxpayers for removal and cleanup;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities, Union of British Columbia Municipalities, and Federation of Canadian Municipalities urge the Federal and Provincial governments to proceed with recommendations of the 2012 Transport Canada Study to establish an “Abandoned and Derelict Vessel Program” funded through reasonable fees sourced from vessel purchases, registration, insurance and moorage, and that such funds be available for disposition costs;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Federal and Provincial governments further establish an “End of Life” Vessel Disposal Program that is sustainable and protects the environment, including appropriate facilities and coordination with local landfills and private sector for proper disposal methods.



Councillor Judy Brownoff

¹ <http://avicc.ca/transport-canadas-study-of-abandoned-and-derelict-vessels-released/>