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CRD sewage planning process short-changes the public

VICTORIA - The CRD should take a step back from its “next steps” strategy if the public is to have meaningful participation in planning for sewage treatment.

“It’s clear listening to today’s presentation on next steps to the Core Area Liquid Waste Management Committee that we have an inadequate plan for public consultation,” says Justin Schmid, president of CUPE 374 and a member of the Technical and Community Advisory Committee providing input into the sewage treatment decision.

Schmid noted that at today’s meeting, a number of the members of the Liquid Waste Management Committee raised concerns about the lack of public consultation and in particular the specific communities who should have a say in every stage of the process.

Kim Manton, a campaign coordinator with CUPE 1978, which represents workers in the CRD, says that the lack of any interactive public forums is surprising and it is a serious concern.

“There is no longer any mention of public open houses, meetings or even presentations to selected groups. Given that the process is well behind what was originally proposed in the CRD communications strategy – it is critical that there be opportunities for the public to come together to hear presentations and ask questions about this significant project and major public expenditure,” says Manton.

The CRD communications strategy, released in January 2007, proposed a community report and a variety of public consultation mechanisms, including open houses, around the report beginning in March.

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