

REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY AND ELECTORAL AREAS

The Comox Valley Regional District board, on occasion, elects to support province-wide concerns and issues in the form of a board resolution. These resolutions are normally forwarded first to the Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities (AVICC) for consideration but may also be forwarded directly to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM). Based on the nature of the concern, UBCM will either endorse or not endorse the recommendation and if endorsed, will present the concern to the provincial or federal government on behalf of all BC municipalities and regional district.

Date of Board meeting: May 10, 2011

Board Resolution: WHEREAS section 848 of the Local Government Act (LGA) excludes electoral areas considered an "affected local government" so that the elected officials from these electoral areas cannot accept a regional growth strategy (RGS);
WHEREAS the elected officials of an electoral area are not deemed to be a local government within the definition of "affected local government" as per section 848 of the Local Government Act (LGA) but could, with a successful legislative amendment, be included in the definition;
WHEREAS the above amendments affect section 857(3) of the Local Government Act (LGA) and therefore this section also needs to be amended to include electoral area directors as the listed entities that may vote on the adoption of a regional growth strategy (RGS);
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that section 848 of the Local Government Act (LGA) be amended to include, as the last portion of the definition, the following text: and all elected officials of electoral areas within the area of jurisdiction for which a regional growth strategy (RGS) is prepared.
AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that section 857(3) of the Local Government Act (LGA) be amended to include the following text (inserted in italics): (3) For the purposes of this section, before third reading of the bylaw to adopt a regional growth strategy, the board must submit the regional growth strategy to: (a) the council of each municipality and the electoral areas committee, if any, all or part of which are covered by the regional growth strategy,

This resolution was referred to UBCM on, May 10, 2011

A response was received on October 4, 2011

Response from UBCM: On motion, NOT ENDORSED at annual convention:
The Resolutions Committee advises that the UBCM membership has not

previously considered a resolution requesting amendments to section 848 of the Local Government Act to grant an electoral area director the authority to approve or not approve a regional growth strategy that is being developed for the region.

Under the Local Government Act, a regional growth strategy must be accepted by each local government affected. This means that the council of each municipality covered by the strategy and the board of each regional district affected must agree to the regional growth strategy. The regional growth strategy is discussed at the regional district board table and as part of this discussion each board member may outline his or her concerns with the growth strategy.

The Committee would note that, while there may be some problems with the consultation process related to regional growth strategies, the proposed amendment to the Local Government Act would appear to deal with more than just improving the consultation process. If the consultation process around regional growth strategies needs to change, then this issue should be dealt with directly. Local governments have found different ways of dealing with this issue where it is seen to be a problem.

The Committee would note that the suggested amendment would appear to grant “local government status” to each electoral area in approving regional growth strategies. In addition, it would give an electoral area director a veto over the potential regional growth strategy for a region.

The proposed change would require a much broader discussion around the future role of regional districts. Currently electoral area directors are elected as members of a regional district board, in the same way as a councillor is elected to a municipal council. The regional district is intended to be the local government entity that responds to growth management issues pertaining to electoral areas. The proposed change would increase the complexity and the cost of developing a regional growth strategy.