



COWICHAN BAY WATERWORKS DISTRICT

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PRESS RELEASE

BUSINESS LEADER CONCERNS RE WATER TOLL RATES

Cowichan Bay Waterworks District is working hard to secure the future supply of water for Cowichan Bay. As such, the Board of Trustees is pleased to learn that business leaders gathered to discuss the future of water in Cowichan Bay.

The Board of Trustees welcomes ongoing engagement from business, and the rest of the community, as essential to managing this vital community resource. We have a challenge ahead of us to balance all the variables needed to keep Cowichan Bay's water supply sufficient, high-quality, safe, cost effective, and provide adequate fire protection. In addition to ageing infrastructure and growing demand, climate change is already creating increased complexity and uncertainty. In real terms, Cowichan Bay needs a new water source (new well) and substantial capital upgrades. It is going to take engaged conversations, like our business leaders took initiative to organize this week, to find the right balance for now and into the future.

Every December, the Water Toll Bylaw is reviewed, and it is at this time that the Board of Trustees can review rates, balancing affordability with all the other needs of our system and community. Upon review of the rate structure in December 2022, which took into consideration the Master Plan and the Source Water Protection Plan, restructuring the rates was necessary.

Previously, residential rate users were subsidizing commercial users — families were paying more for their water than businesses. Now all users pay an \$85 base rate + a consumption charge. To encourage conservation, and to reflect the impact that large consumers have on our overall system needs and production costs, the consumption charge is tiered. This means that all consumers now pay more per cubic meter as their water consumption rises into the upper tiers.

Earlier In 2023, the Board of Trustees listened to commercial ratepayers and have already made changes that resulted in significant reductions in commercial bills. Between now and the December 2023 Water Toll Bylaw review, the Board of Trustees is committed to ongoing dialogue and information sharing with business consumers, and residential consumers, in our continued effort to achieve the best possible balance for the whole of the community.

Sincerely,

Calvin Slade, Chairperson

Cowichan Bay Waterworks District Board of Trustees

References: www.cowichanbaywater.com [Documents Tab, scroll to Master Plan and Source Water Protection Plan]