



Council Member Motion
For the Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting of October 8, 2015

Date: October 2, 2015

From: Councillor Ben Isitt and Councillor Jeremy Loveday

Subject: Workplace health and safety through Asbestos control

Background:

The mining of asbestos has been discontinued in Canada and the country is no longer exporting this product abroad to emerging countries such as India to process. However, the Canadian construction industry continues to bear the imprint of asbestos, in terms of legacy construction materials in buildings and maritime vessels as well as recently and newly imported construction materials. The presence of these materials, often unreported, unpublished and unknown, threatens the health and safety of workers in the building trades as well as occupants of buildings and the users of vessels, with deliberating impacts on individuals with medical conditions arising from exposure to asbestos as well as their families.

The Vancouver Island Building Trades Council and workers in the building and maritime construction industries have requested that all levels of government take action to increase protections for workers in the face of the ongoing health and safety risks of asbestos.

It is therefore proposed that the City of Victoria place itself on record advocating for increased protections to the provincial and federal levels of government, including the establishment of a National Registry of public buildings and maritime vessels containing asbestos and products containing asbestos, as well as examining actions the City can take within its own areas of jurisdiction to increase protections for workers from the health and safety risks of asbestos.

Recommendation:

THAT Council:

- (1) Requests that the Mayor write to the Prime Minister of Canada endorsing the establishment of National Registries of public buildings and public maritime vessels containing asbestos products and requesting a federal ban on the importation of asbestos and building products containing asbestos into Canada;
- (2) Requests that the Mayor write to the Premier of British Columbia, the Minister Responsible for Housing and the Minister of Advanced Education, (1) requesting co-operation with the Federal and Municipal governments in the establishment of National Registries of public buildings and public maritime vessels containing asbestos and building products containing asbestos; (2) proposing more rigorous training in asbestos safety, mitigation and removal within the provincial trades training, apprenticeship and accreditation system; and (3) recommending improvements to the BC Building Code to increase protections for workers from the health and safety risks of asbestos;

- (3) Refers the following motion for consideration during the next quarterly Strategic Priorities review:

THAT Council direct staff to report on options for increasing protections for workers in the building trades through the prohibition of the use of asbestos and building products containing asbestos in construction activities authorized by building permit in the City of Victoria;

AND THAT this report include advice from the Fire Chief on the advisability of prohibiting the use of asbestos and building products containing asbestos in construction activities in the City of Victoria;

AND THAT this report include advice on the resource implications and advisability of including municipal buildings, facilities and maritime vessels in National Registries of public buildings and public maritime vessels containing asbestos and building products containing asbestos.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Ben Isitt



Councillor Jeremy Loveday

Attachments.

Letter from Vancouver Island Building Trades Council to Prime Minister of Canada