



Council Member Motion

For the Governance and Priorities Committee meeting of November 5, 2015

Date: October 30, 2015

From: Councillor Ben Isitt and Councillor Jeremy Loveday

Subject: Stewarding Water Systems Responsibly through the Elimination of Single-Use Plastic Bags

BACKGROUND:

The City of Victoria's Strategic Plan 2015-2018 identifies Stewarding Water Systems and Waste Streams Responsibly as a strategic priority.

Jurisdictions across North America and the globe have increased stewardship of water systems through the elimination of single-use plastic bags. This includes national jurisdictions such as Rwanda, sub-national jurisdictions such as the state of Hawaii, and local government jurisdictions in the United States including the City of Seattle, City of Los Angeles, City of San Francisco, and City of Chicago, and Canadian municipalities including Wood Buffalo (Fort McMurray), Alberta; Thompson and Leaf Rapids, Manitoba; and Huntingdon and Deux-Montanges, Quebec.

Scientific research confirms that single-use plastic bags are a major source of pollution of local waterways as well as the marine ecosystem, with the concentration of micro-plastics in some areas of the Pacific Ocean exceeding the concentration of plankton. Pollution relating to single-use plastic bags also contaminates local waterways within the City of Victoria and Capital Region, imposing infrastructure maintenance and repair costs on local government, and harming marine species.

It is therefore proposed that the City of Victoria introduce for first reading a bylaw to steward water systems responsibly through the elimination of single-use plastic bags within the city. This would provide a process for formal input from the public, including various stakeholders, prior to Council consideration of a bylaw.

It is also proposed that Council request that the Mayor write to neighbouring municipalities and electoral areas within the Capital Region requesting the introduction of similar bylaws by these local governments with a view toward the elimination of single-use plastic bags across the region.

The following motion proposes that Council considers this matter in conjunction with the quarterly update scheduled for November 5, 2015.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council refer the following resolution for consideration in conjunction with the Quarterly Update on November 5, 2015:

- (1) THAT Council direct staff to prepare a bylaw for first reading modelled on the attached draft bylaw, stewarding water systems responsibly through the elimination of single-use plastic bags in the City of Victoria;

- (2) AND THAT Council invite public comment on the proposed bylaw following first reading;
- (3) AND THAT Council requests that the Mayor write to the Mayors and Councils of the thirteen municipalities within the Capital Region, and to Directors representing the three electoral areas, proposing elimination of single-use plastic bags and the introduction of bylaws by these local government jurisdictions to extend the responsible stewardship of water systems throughout the Capital Region.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Ben Isitt



Councillor Jeremy Loveday

Attachments:

Letter from Surfrider Foundation – Vancouver Island Chapter
Legal brief on municipal powers
Draft Bylaw
Letters of support from businesses
Letter from Rupert Yakelashek
Letter from MLA Lana Popham
Petition of support from residents