



Council Member Motion

For the Governance and Priorities Committee Meeting of January 7, 2016

Date: December 5, 2015

From: Councillors Isitt, Councillor Loveday and Mayor Helps

Subject: FCM Resolution - Federal Bill of Environmental Rights

Background:

The City of Victoria was the first jurisdiction on Vancouver Island to adopt a Declaration of the Right to a Healthy Environment, and helped spearhead the successful effort calling on the Union of BC Municipalities to endorse the proposal for a Provincial Bill of Environmental Rights.

Now, residents and advocacy organizations including the Blue Dot Movement are proposing that Canada's new federal government introduce a Federal Bill of Environmental Rights in Parliament.

The federal government's mandate letter to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change identifies the "overarching goal... to take the lead in implementing the government's plan for a clean environment and a sustainable economy."

Support for Environmental Rights is consistent with several components of the City of Victoria's Strategic Plan and aligns with the aspirations of residents and Council to demonstrate leadership in protecting and restoring ecological systems and the natural environment.

It is therefore proposed that Council endorse the following resolution calling for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to support the request for a Federal Bill of Environmental Rights, and forward the resolution to member local governments requesting favourable consideration and resolutions of support.

Recommendation:

THAT Council endorse the following resolution for consideration at the 2016 Annual Convention of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, requesting that the motion be considered by delegates at the Annual Convention in Winnipeg, rather than referred to Directors at a Board meeting, in order to encourage debate among representatives from all member local governments;

AND THAT Council direct staff to forward the resolution to all member local governments of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, requesting favourable consideration and resolutions of support:

WHEREAS municipalities are the governments that are nearest to the people and the natural environment, and therefore share a deep concern for the well-being of the natural environment and understand that a healthy environment is inextricably linked to the health of individuals, families, future generations and communities;

AND WHEREAS federal policy affects municipalities' abilities to deliver the best environmental conditions for their citizens, including protecting natural assets such as air, water and soil, and enhancing community quality of life;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that FCM request that the Government of Canada enact federal environmental rights legislation that:

- recognizes the right of every resident to live in a healthy environment, including the right to clean air, clean water, safe food and resilient, fully functioning ecosystems;
- provides for public participation in decision-making on issues regarding the environment and access to environmental information;
- provides access to justice when environmental rights are infringed; and
- includes provisions for whistle-blower protection.

Respectfully submitted,

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Councillor Isitt

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Loveday'.

Councillor Loveday

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Helps'.

Mayor Helps