



## Governance and Priorities Committee Motion

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**Date:** January 23, 2014

**From:** Mayor Fortin & Councillor Isitt

**Subject:** Utility bill deferral

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### Executive Summary

The Province of BC's Property Tax Deferralment Program is a low-interest Provincial loan program designed to help low-income seniors and people with disabilities pay their annual property taxes, which are billed as a lump-sum once a year.

In 2013, 1,160 homeowners in the City of Victoria used the program and the number of participants grows every year.

The program is administered by the Province and there is no financial risk to the City.

The City of Victoria is changing the way we manage and bill for municipal services, in order to provide dedicated, sustainable funding for those services. Utility expenses are directly linked to delivered service, which also allows individuals to influence their utility costs by adjusting their personal usage. Costs for services such as water, sewer and garbage have been taken off property tax bills and are being billed through a separate utility bill.

Currently, the Provincial Tax Deferralment Program does not allow for deferral for municipal utility bills.

Whereas the spirit of the Tax Deferralment Program is to assist low-income seniors and people with disabilities to remain in their homes longer, the recommendation is to encourage the Provincial Government to include municipal utility bills in a deferralment program.

### Recommendation

1. That Council write to the Provincial Government, requesting that municipal utility bills be eligible for a Provincial deferralment program.
2. That Council forward a motion to the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, encouraging the associations to write to the Province of British Columbia, requesting that municipal utility bills be eligible for Provincial deferralment program.

Respectfully submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dean Fortin".

Mayor Dean Fortin

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ben Isitt".

Councillor Ben Isitt