



# OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-TREASURER

556 BOLESKINE ROAD, VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA V8Z 1E8  
PHONE (250) 475-4108 FAX (250) 475-4112

---

TO: The Operations Policy and Planning Committee

FROM: Mark Walsh, Secretary-Treasurer

DATE: June 13, 2016

RE: **Water Quality**

---

## **Background:**

At the March 2016 Operations Policy and Planning Committee meeting, I provided a backgrounder on the District's new requirement to test all facilities for water quality issues associated with lead. I indicated that in advance of a meeting with VIHA, required by the Ministry directive, we were planning a District testing regime. I also indicated that the District has utilized best practices, flushing our water systems each day to ensure that standing water is evacuated prior to consumption. Finally, I indicated that while limited testing had occurred in the District, the testing that had occurred did not suggest issues.

Following the meeting, we tested two facilities on an expedited basis which also did not raise concerns. While we have not yet had the opportunity to create a formal plan with VIHA we proceeded to test a few water exit sites in each of our schools. This testing came back on Friday May 27, 2016. While the majority of our schools indicated no issues, a number of schools returned results that indicated elevated levels of lead either before or after the flush.

The following week we ordered extensive further testing at the sites that raised concerns. We ordered 600 tests. The results will be provided at the Operations Policy and Planning Committee meeting. While the specific results are being analyzed for presentation, we are aware that a number of schools will require either immediate attention (schools that have provided results that are concerning both pre- and post-flush) as well as attention in the short term (schools where the pre-flush results are a concern but not the post-flush results).

Further, we are now expanding our test procedures to determine if potential issues are stemming from internal (e.g. school pipes) or external (e.g. municipal potable water supply) sources to ensure that our planning can address the core issue at all impacted sites.

## **Action:**

For the immediate attention schools, we will be replacing water fountains with new filtered water fountains with a filtration system sufficient to meet our challenge. Currently, a number of schools have already installed the fountains and simply need a filtration system. In other examples, we will have to provide a fountain. The cost is approximately \$1,200 for a fountain with filter or \$3,000 for a fountain, filter and bottle filler but we expect to see a smaller unit cost with a bulk purchase. In addition, we will be adding a non-potable water warning to all outlets in the impacted schools that are not upgraded. While the problem is not widespread, it is sufficient enough that the resources to fund the "fix" are anticipated to be significant.