

Subject: Oct. 15/22 CVRD Referendum:

The CVRD Oct. 15/22 Referendum, “Regional Recreation Funding Services” was discussed at Thursday night’s TIRRA Regular General Meeting as part of a members’ forum to bring forward issues affecting all Thetis Islanders. The complete referendum wording is at, [2022 Regional Referendum - Regional Recreation Funding Services | Cowichan Valley Regional District \(cvrd.ca\)](#)

Paul Duncan, TIRRA member, is urging people to vote “No” as the referendum doesn’t live up to its billing of “Play Fair, Pay Fair.” It is not based on user pay for the Gulf Islands who do not use CVRD recreational services and yet will have their taxes go from \$0/\$100,000 assessed value to \$15.33/\$100,000 assessed value. You can check Gulf Island usage at [2022-04-27-Regional-Rec-Facility-Use-Analysis-Final-Report \(cvrd.ca\)](#), page 25. “Electoral Area G – Islands” highest use was the Cowichan Performing Arts Centre at .18% of all uses and .18% usage is not statistically significant (Page 23 Summary #3).

The CVRD Board turned down Lynne Smith’s (Area G Director) amendment to exclude the Gulf Islands from the resolution. The CVRD Board has seen the numbers and know the Gulf Islands do not use these facilities but turned down the amendment anyways. The future CVRD Board should do the right thing and live up to their moto, “Play Fair, Pay Fair” and exempt regions with minimal usage.

Looking into the future, future recreational funding will be tied to inflation as governments face cost increases and taxpayers face increased assessed values. The 2019 Budget was used as the baseline for the referendum because it was pre-COVID and projected \$15,790,000 funding for all of the recreational facilities. The current maximum authorization of \$35 million will remain regardless of whether the referendum is approved so there is lots of room for further tax increases.

The impact of a “Yes” vote is a few regions will decrease their taxes while most regions will see higher taxes. There are no projections of total revenue 3 years forward after the transition period so we don’t know if the referendum which redistributes the tax burden today is revenue neutral 3 years forward. There will probably be winners and losers so all regions should examine whether their increase seems fair remembering, if it is not fair for one region, how can it be fair for all?

It’s a shame that CVRD has spent so much time and money bringing forward this resolution. All they had to do was make a few minor corrections for obvious inequities to gain broad regional district support. At this late date, the only remaining option is to vote “No”.

What can you do to help? Use your social media (email, Facebook, etc.) to spread the news that this referendum is a bad idea and requires changes. Ask your CVRD candidates where they stand on this issue and what they plan to do if there is a “Yes” vote. Contact Paul on how to spread the word beyond Thetis Island (paulduncanvictoria@shaw.ca). Remember to vote “No” on October 15th.

Thanks

Paul Duncan, TIRRA member