

**SOUTH FRASER RIVER
ENHANCEMENT
SOCIETY**



(formerly Ladner Sediment Group)

South Fraser River Enhancement Society Presentation to Delta Council

September 23, 2024

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Executive Summary

The South Fraser River Enhancement Society, previously known as the Ladner Sediment group, is a registered non-profit organization that brings together stakeholders from various sectors. These stakeholders include representatives from Industry, Business, Marinas, Fisheries, Ladner Yacht Club, Delta Lifeboat (Canadian Lifeboat Institution), Float Home Communities, and Private Float home attached properties. Our society's primary objective is to restore and maintain the secondary channels of the South Fraser River advocate for and support our members, all while ensuring a sustainable coexistence between the Fraser River ecosystem and the individuals who reside, work, and derive enjoyment from the waterways.

Located on the Fraser River Estuary, Ladner is home to 148 Float Homes situated on private property attached water lots and 5 Float Home Communities. These unique residences are an integral part of Ladner's rich history, drawing in tourists and often featured alongside other Float Home communities worldwide. Canoe Pass Village in Ladner holds the distinction of being the first officially registered Floating Home Community in Canada. Float Homes, along with the marine and community businesses that support them, play a vital role in Delta's economy by creating job opportunities, promoting commerce, and generating tax revenue. As Delta strives to revitalize the downtown Ladner waterfront, there are opportunities for floating businesses, restaurants and housing to take pride of place. Occupying only a fraction of the land compared to traditional houses, Float Homes offer a sustainable and affordable housing option that aligns with the BC Government's objective of expanding housing choices.

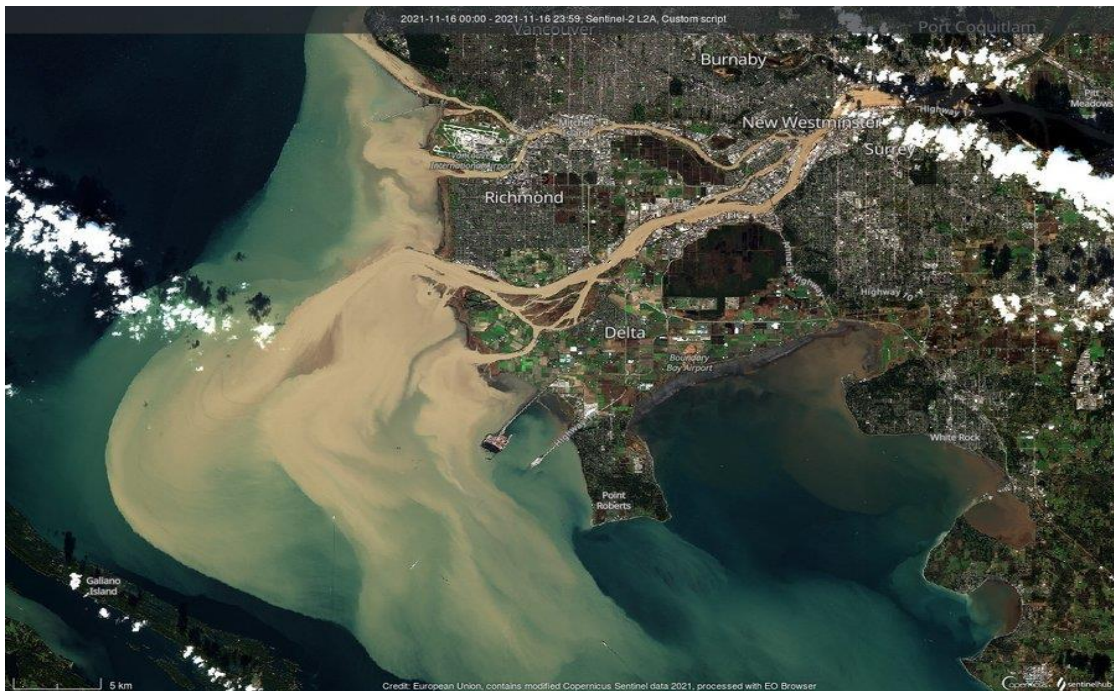
Background

Ladner Secondary Channels

The Fraser River is the largest river by discharge flowing into the Pacific seaboard of Canada. The river spans the province travelling 1,370 kms from headwaters in the Rocky Mountains to eventually fan out through the Fraser River Delta into the Salish Sea. 20M tons of sediment flows down the Fraser each year.

The South Arm of the Fraser River, located beneath the Massey Tunnel, features six navigation channels that serve the areas of Ladner, Canoe Pass, and Westham Island. These channels eventually reconnect to the South Arm of the Fraser River further downstream via the Sea Reach channel. The navigability of these channels is monitored by Public Works Canada in conjunction with the Coast Guard. Depth measurements of the channels are taken annually through “soundings” and are precisely located using GPS. The Coast Guard publishes these annual soundings to support real-time marine navigation. Since the last dredging in 2015, sediment from the Fraser River has accumulated in the channels, making them unsuitable for navigation. This sedimentation severely hampers access to the Ladner Federal Harbour, fish processing plants, marinas, boat moorage, float home communities, and all other commercial enterprises reliant on these portions of the Fraser River.

2021 – Lower Fraser River Sediment Plume



Moratorium on Crown Land Water leases for Float Homes

In British Columbia today, the Province (“The Crown”) own the waterways including the Fraser River. The Small Craft Harbours are managed by Port Metro and Federal Agencies. Access to the Ladner Harbour and a portion of the Harbour used by Fisheries are managed by Federal Agencies with the remainder of the harbour, Crown Land (Water) under Provincial authority.

Prior to 2012 the New Westminister Office of the Fraser River Harbour Commission had a ‘head lease’ over portions of the South Fraser including Ladner Channels. Applications for subleasing went through the New Westminister Office. (under the authority of Port Metro). On January 1, 2015, the head lease over the lower Fraser expired, and lease management reverted to the Province.

The province immediately established a “temporary” two-year moratorium (policy) on float homes “until they could establish a planning policy and process for subleases.” Only Existing leases are permitted to be renewed. The Province rolled the temporary 2015 moratorium over in 2017,2019,2021,2023 to 2025.

****It should be noted that the provincial moratorium is a policy and is not legislated.**

Restoration and Maintenance of the South Fraser River Secondary Channels

Siltation – Contributing Factors - Man-made

Siltation of rivers and channels is a natural occurrence around the world. Although some siltation is expected in the Ladner channels, the problem has been exacerbated by a number of Government sanctioned changes to the natural flow of the River.

- 1.) Ladner Ferry operated from 1913 to 1959 as the only South Arm crossing between Ladner and Richmond. Construction of the Ladner Ferry Landing blocked off a portion of the channel feeding the top of Ladner Reach redirecting water flow.
- 2.) To replace the ferry in 1956 the Deas Tunnel (George Massey Tunnel) was constructed under the South Arm of the Fraser River just upstream of the branches to Ladner. Tunnel installation resulted in the capping off Deas Channel and turned it into a slough eliminating all flow and supply to the top of Ladner Channels.
- 3.) Dredge spoils from the tunnel excavation were dumped in the Ladner Channel immediately adjacent to Port Guichon. Between 1968 and 1980 dredge spoils from the creation of Ladner Harbour by the Department of Fisheries were added to the tunnel dredge spoils narrowing the channel significantly below the Harbour thereby constricting flow further.
- 4.) The dredge spoil sites are now uninhabited islands with mature trees pictured in the background below and identified as habitat sites. These Islands have added to the diversion of water velocity and increased the sediment load in the water column.
- 5.) Forest fire denuding hillside vegetation bounding the Fraser River.

Siltation – Contributing Factors - Natural

In addition to ‘man-made’ changes to the River flow, British Columbia has witnessed a few natural events that have significantly increased the sediment load.

- 1.) The Big Bar Slide (June 2019)
- 2.) Abbotsford Flood (Dec 2021)
- 3.) Floods and landslides of November 2022
- 4.) Chilcotin Landslide (July 2024)

Restoration and Maintenance

To maintain the health, safety and sustainability of Rivers, Estuaries and Harbours, various methods are employed including dredging, to restore water flow and remove sediment accumulations.

In 2023, the Ladner Sediment Group, now known as the South Fraser River Sediment Group, prepared and distributed a Dredging Proposal for the Ladner secondary channels. Included was the 2022 Coast Guard ‘Soundings’¹, the corresponding ‘Design Depth’² and estimated costs.

The cost per cubic metre of \$20 plus a \$0.50 government disposal fee has been applied to the dredging quantities to determine the following costs.

Area	Material Estimate / M ³	Dredge Depth Below Low Water Line / M	Cost Estimate
Ladner Harbour & Channel	138,235	-3.6	\$2.83M
Portion of Canoe Pass	25,838	-3.6	\$0.53M
Ladner Feeder	54,325	-3.6	\$1.12M
Deas Slough	102,380	-3.6	\$2.10M
Ladner Reach	21,370	-3.6	\$0.44M
Sea Reach	44,100	-4.5	\$0.91M
Total Quantity +/-	387,000		\$7.93M

**The full Dredging Proposal can be downloaded from our website: [Dredging Proposal](#)

Proposal

The South Fraser River Enhancement Society suggest the formation of a Waterway Maintenance Committee with City of Delta staff, Tsawwassen First Nation, Musqueam First Nation and SFRES for the purpose of advocating for secondary channel maintenance funding.

¹ Soundings are a measurement of the depth of water

² Design Depth is a measurement of water depth the Canadian Coast Guard deems safe for navigation

Moratorium on Crown Land for Float Homes (Ministry of Water, Lands and Resource Stewardship)

The Province owns the water (Crown Land) in BC and leases the water lots to individual owners and commercial entities. A water lease application or re-assignment requires a Management Plan. The Plan is submitted by the Upland owner and includes a site survey, photos and details of all buildings, docks, ramps, pilings, easements, safety equipment, proposed use, number of people and proof of liability insurance for the docks and ramps.

A foreshore³ lease will typically require access from a public road (easement) and the City of Delta controls the upland and foreshore use via OCP and zoning.

In 2019, the Province of BC updated the following moratorium policies that are still in effect today:

Float Home Community Policy

4.1 Applications

Applications for floating home community use of aquatic Crown land will not be accepted.

Floating Home Community Policy

Crown Land Residential Use policy

4.5 Float Homes Applications for new individual float homes will not be accepted, except in extenuating circumstances and only in areas that have been specifically designated for float home use in an approved land use plan (such as an Official Community Plan or a Provincial Land Use Plan).

Land use planning should discourage individual dispersed float home sites.

Floating Home Policy

³ the part of a shore between high- and low-water marks, or between the water and cultivated or developed land.

Policy Impacts (Moratorium)

- 1.) Delta areas currently zoned ‘marine mixed use’ is unable to add additional housing in the form of Floating Homes
- 2.) De-valuation of Delta property with attached Water Leases
- 3.) De-valuation of Float Homes
- 4.) Market uncertainty for current and future Float Home Sales
- 5.) 2–4-year delays in Lease Renewals / re-assignments
- 6.) “Cash buyer Only’ market for Float homes as Financial Institutions will not lend on Mortgage amortizations over the length of the lease.

Ex: Float Home listed for \$800,000 with a remaining lease of 9 years

Purchase Price	\$800,000
25% Down	\$200,000
6.93% Rate	
Amortization 9 years (monthly Payment)	\$7,485

Float Home Requirements

New Float Homes being constructed for Delta properties require a City of Delta Building Permit and may require a City of Delta Development Permit. They must also meet the BC Float Home 2009 requirements. There are a few additional requirements as follows:

- Access to potable water and electricity
- Sewage system – 2 Options
 - Connection to the City Mains or
 - On-site treatment (Onsite treatment systems allow the Float Home to be located outside of the GVRD Sewer district)
- Float home must have positive flotation (typically concrete and foam foundation)
- 3M Separation between Float Homes
- 1.5M Side yard Setback
- 6M Clear access to water for Fire Protection
- 1.2M of water below the home at low tide
- 2-4 piles to Anchor the home

- Must be clear of navigation channel
- Float Home sites can be multi-layered where there is space between the shore and the Navigation channel. Areas such as River Rd West offers mostly a single loaded foreshore. A typical 20m wide upland property can accommodate 2 - 7m wide float homes.

Delta OCP Housing Policies

The South Fraser River Enhancement Society (formerly Ladner Sediment group) proposes the following changes to preserve and support the existence of Float Homes in Delta. Float Homes and Float Home Communities contribute to Delta's economy and are part of the rich and unique history and future of the Lower Fraser River.

The Provincial Government's Housing Mandate necessitates Delta to incorporate 3607 housing units within the next 5 years. This presents an opportunity for Delta to demonstrate its support for Float Homes and take full advantage of its proximity to the protected channels of the South Fraser River Estuary. The inclusion of Float Homes in the 'Marine Mixed Use' category highlights Delta's commitment to embracing diverse housing options.

SFRES recommends the following revisions to the Delta OCP Housing Policies to express its endorsement of Float Homes.

- **Policy 2.1.6** - Support innovative or non-traditional forms and models of housing, such as modular housing, adaptive re-use, co-ops, cohousing, or incorporation of housing into typically nonresidential structures
 - **Suggested Policy Wording**
 - Support innovative or non-traditional forms and models of housing, such as modular housing, float homes, adaptive re-use, co-ops, cohousing, or incorporation of housing into typically nonresidential structures.
- **Policy 2.1.23** - Advocate to the Provincial Government to provide more certainty and clarity regarding the future of water lot leases for floating homes.
 - **Suggested Policy Wording**
 - Request the Provincial Government lift the water lease moratorium on New Float Homes in areas that the Delta OCP has zoned 'marine mixed-use' and has established criteria for such structures.

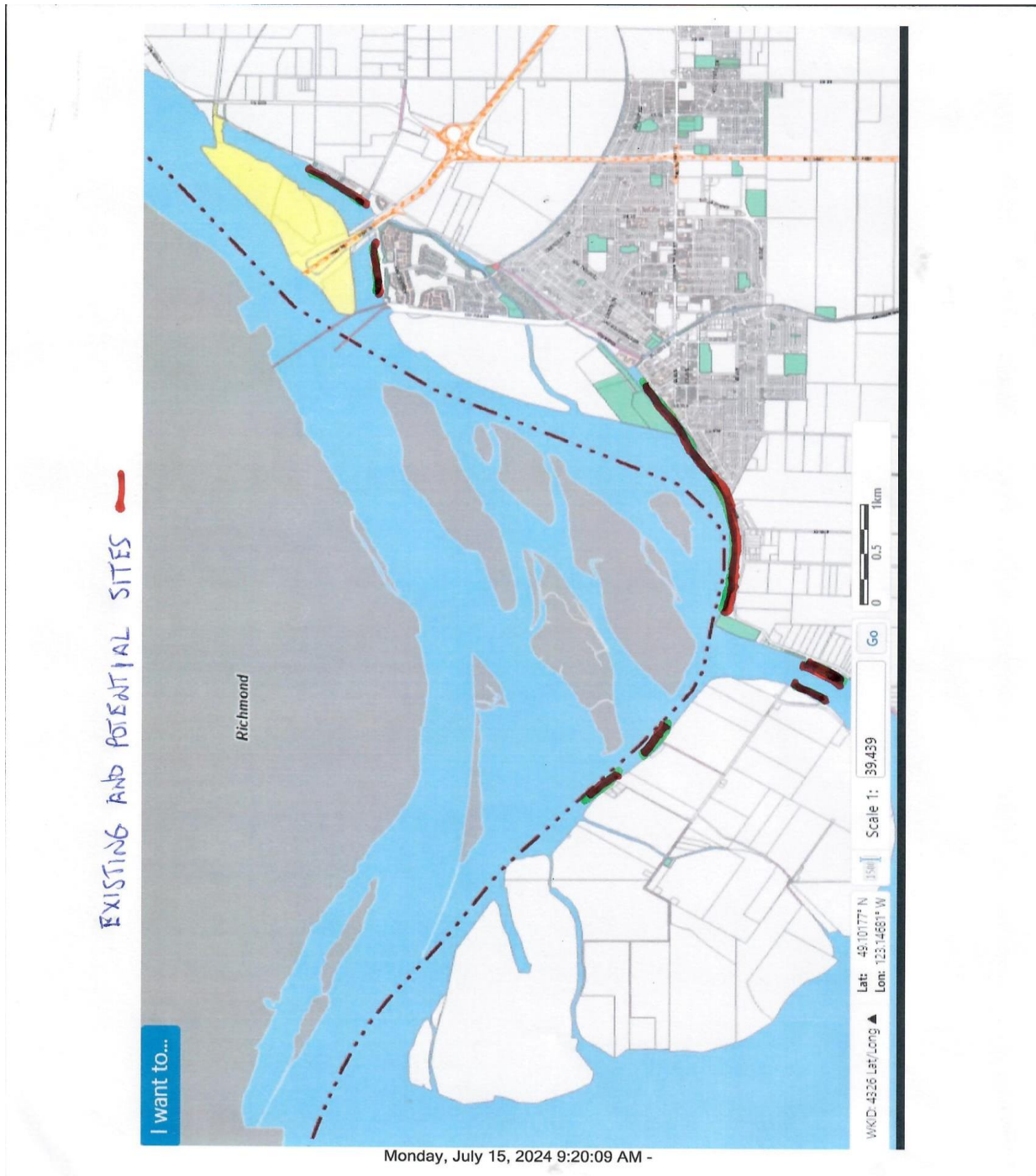
Summary

Delta is presented with a significant opportunity to showcase innovation in tackling the BC Housing Crisis by offering a variety of housing solutions while preserving and enhancing its distinctive character. Float Homes represent a sustainable and affordable alternative, specifically designed to adapt to climate change and rising sea levels. As Delta progresses with the development of Downtown Ladner and the Waterfront, the introduction of floating restaurants and shops will further enrich our vibrant community and attract tourism revenue. Delta can maintain its leadership role in promoting housing options by incorporating future Float Home developments into its Official Community Plan (OCP) while upholding its commitment to First Nations and the health and sustainability of the Fraser River.

The South Fraser River Enhancement Society, although a newly formed non-profit organization, is committed to continuing the valuable work initiated by the Ladner Sediment Group, who have been strong advocates for Ladner and the local waterways since 2008. We respectfully request the support of Delta Mayor Harvie and Delta Council in addressing the safety of our Ladner Waterways for all vessels, supporting our Float Home residents and preserving our special and unique Ladner Community. This includes implementing a Waterway Maintenance Committee, incorporating Float Home support in the OCP and advocating for the removal of the Float Home moratorium specifically for Ladner.

Appendixes

Appendix A: Combined Existing and New Ladner Float Home Sites



Appendix B: Lower Ladner Harbour Floating Restaurants / Shops

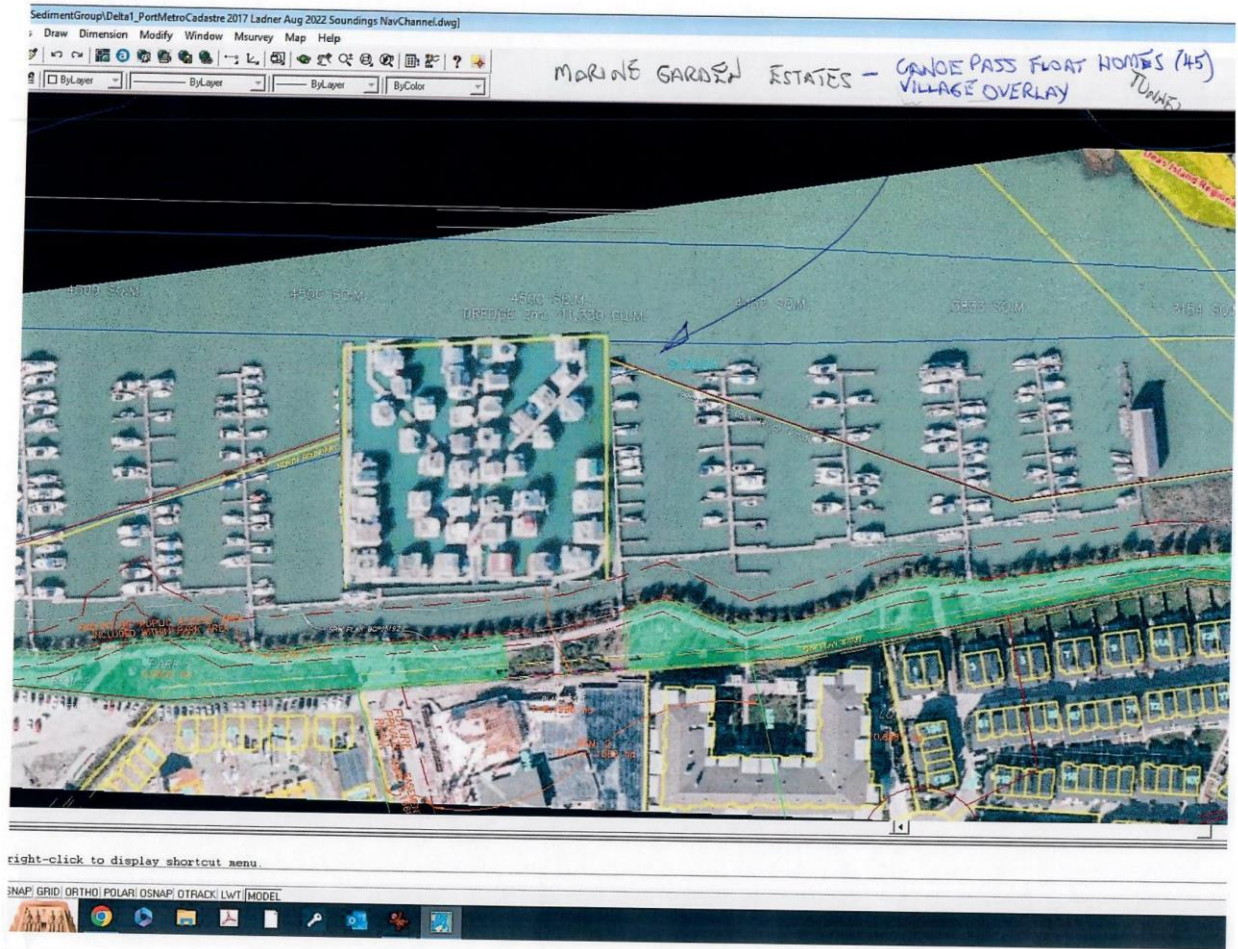
LOWER LADNER HARBOUR - FLOATING COMMERCIAL / RESTAURANT



Appendix C: Upper Ladner Harbour Floating Restaurants / Shops



Appendix D: Hampton Cove with Canoe Pass Overlay



Appendix E: Deas Slough New Float Homes

DEAS SLOUGH POTENTIALLY 22 HOMES FRONTING 11 LOTS



Appendix F: River Road West 10-20 New Float Homes

300 m \approx 28 FLOAT HOMES

(FRONTAGE
LINEAR 9-11 m / FLOAT HOME)



Appendix G: Letter from Mayor Harvie



Office of Mayor George V. Harvie
City of Delta



MAYOR'S OFFICE

Delta

April 8, 2024

The Honourable Bruce Ralston

Minister of Forests

PO Box 9049, Stn Prov Govt

Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister,

Re: Administration of Water Lot Leases in the Lower Fraser River Estuary

I am writing to address a significant concern that impacts not only the Delta community but potentially many coastal communities throughout British Columbia: the administration of water lot leases in the Lower Fraser River estuary.

As you are aware, the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations, and Rural Development has responsibility for the administration of Crown land in this vital area. This transition, while essential, has brought to light several challenges affecting the well-being and economic stability of float homeowners and others seeking to acquire or renew water lot tenures. Among these challenges are notable delays in the processing of applications, restrictions on permitted uses, and tenure limitations that fall short of providing the long-term certainty required for meaningful investment and development.

Such conditions have not only stifled waterfront development proposals but have also placed undue strain on local government efforts towards community revitalization. More specifically, the float home community faces a dilemma—without the assurance of extended water lot leases, homeowners find themselves unable to secure financing with

amortization periods sufficient to ensure affordability and stability. Further, I have been told that some applicants have been informed of processing timeline in the order of years to even have their requests reviewed let alone approved. This predicament threatens not only the economic fabric of our waterfront communities, but also the very essence of a lifestyle cherished by many British Columbians.

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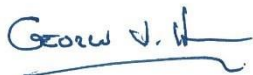
April 8, 2024
Page 2

I understand and commend the Ministry's efforts to engage with First Nations, such as the Collaborative Management Agreement signed with the Musqueam First Nation in March 2017, which highlights a commitment to meaningful consultation and stewardship. However, amidst these positive strides, the need for an expedited tenure replacement process that balances the interests of all stakeholders—providing long-term certainty for leaseholders, facilitating waterfront development, and honoring First Nations consultations—remains pressing.

Therefore, I respectfully request that the provincial government intensify its efforts to implement such a process, ensuring that it is both efficient and inclusive. By doing so, we can unlock the full potential of our waterfront areas, bolster economic development, and provide our communities with the stability they need to thrive.

I am eager to collaborate closely with your ministry and other stakeholders to find a resolution that serves the best interests of all parties involved. Thank you for considering this urgent matter.

Yours truly,



George V. Harvie

Mayor

cc: Delta Council
Donny van Dyk, City Manager Ian Paton, MLA for Delta South

Ravi Kahlon, MLA for Delta North

WesDel Marina Strata Council

Appendix H: Letter response to Mayor Harvie from Minister Cullen



Reference: 41458

July 17, 2024

VIA EMAIL: MayorHarvie@delta.ca

Mayor George V. Harvie
City of Delta
4500 Clarence Taylor Crescent
Delta, British Columbia V4K 3E2

Dear Mayor Harvie:

Thank you for your letter of April 8, 2024, to Honourable Bruce Ralson, Minister of Forests, regarding the administration of water lot leases in the Lower Fraser River Estuary. The Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) is now responsible for the administration of Crown land. I am pleased to respond and apologize for the delay.

The Lower Fraser River Estuary is a complex ecosystem to manage economically, socially, and environmentally. There is a significant amount of broader planning work required to address ongoing sustainable management of the estuary; dredging and associated activities are a key consideration within that context. In addition, this area is of high importance to First Nations groups, specifically regarding First Nation title and rights, climate change, archaeological values and cumulative effect impacts from historic use.

I appreciate your concerns regarding the impacts of delays in processing of applications. WLRS receives a high volume of applications and general requests regarding the use of Crown land. All applications are prioritized based on the provincial priorities of housing, drought management and the Agriculture Water Infrastructure Program, BC Hydro's call for power, Connecting Communities BC, public safety, adventure tourism, environmental risk, and support of reconciliation with First Nations. Unfortunately, float homes are not presently a component of the suite of solutions being pursued to address housing needs, due to the social and environmental sustainability issues that remain outstanding, and the unique additional challenges associated with float homes such as channel maintenance and dredging.

I recognize the challenges in obtaining financing with the length of tenure offered; however, leases with terms beyond 30 years start to share similarities with fee simple land ownership, which lead to further considerations. One example is that property transfer tax is required to be paid on the transfer of leases over 30 years. In addition, the Province has heard concerns

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Mayor Harvie, City of Delta

from First Nations regarding the impacts of long-term leases and the sale of Crown land on First Nations rights and title, in particular in areas of importance to a First Nation's ability to exercise its rights. Finally, relinquishing long-term control of submerged lands limits the tools available for managing the area for navigation, economic development, environmental management, and climate change.

Given the value that the Lower Fraser River estuary holds, WLRS works to ensure decisions regarding the use of this are considered in a manner that support economic activity, environmental sustainability, and reconciliation with First Nations.

Again, thank you for your patience on this issue and for writing and sharing your concerns.

Sincerely,



Nathan Cullen Minister pc: Honourable Bruce Ralson, Minister of
Forests

Appendix I: Letter response to Ross Rettie from Minister Kahlon



**BRITISH
COLUMBIA**

July 18, 2024

Ref. 66918

S. Ross Rettie

3473 River Road West Delta BC
V4K 5E9

Email: rossrettie@gmail.com

Dear Ross Rettie:

Thank you for your email of April 8, 2024 regarding your float home community in Delta, and for bringing these concerns to our attention. My sincere apologies for the delay in responding. While I am unable to meet in-person to discuss these matters I hope you will find the following information helpful.

In your email, you raised concerns with the two-year (and continuing) moratorium on new float home developments. Ministry of Housing staff have connected with staff at the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) to better understand this issue.

The Fraser River is a complex ecosystem to manage economically, recreationally, and environmentally. The Province is aware of the broader planning work required to address ongoing sustainable management of the river that includes dredging at the right places and at the right frequency, cumulative impacts, and climate change. The Moratorium began when these first challenges were being raised, and ensures that the problem is not exacerbated by adding more users to the system until planning is complete and solutions are implemented.

Staff have also informed me that WLRS is receiving an incredibly high volume of applications and general requests regarding the use of Crown land. Given this volume, applications are prioritized based on provincial priorities including housing, drought management and the Agriculture Water Infrastructure Program, BC Hydro's call for power,

Connecting Communities BC, public safety, adventure tourism, environmental risk, and reconciliation with First Nations.

In your email you also shared your interest in securing a longer, 60-year lease term. We have been made aware of some complexities with lease terms beyond 30 years starting to have some similarities with land ownership, including, for example, the payment of property transfer tax which is required on leases over 30 years.

The Province is also committed to reconciliation with First Nations, and understands the importance of these waters to First Nations communities and the impacts of very long-term leases and the sale of Crown land on First Nations rights and title.

Thank you again for taking the time to raise awareness of these concerns and your advocacy on this matter. Learning more about these issues, and impacts of government policy and programs on communities, helps inform both our day-to-day work and future opportunities for policy development.

I appreciate you sharing this information, and I hope this response has been of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ravi Kahlon', written over a light gray rectangular background.

Ravi Kahlon

Minister of Housing

cc: The Honourable David Eby, KC, Premier

The Honourable Nathan Cullen, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

Appendix J: Ministerial Order – Moratorium Exception

- **MO M24 March 1, 2023 – Applications for a float home or float home community not accepted effective March 01, 2023 to March 01, 2025** with the exception of specific circumstances in the Powell River area where regional criteria has been developed to manage float home applications.

PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

ORDER OF THE MINISTER OF FORESTS

Ministerial Order

No. M24

1. I, Tammy Hillyer, Director of Resource Authorizations for South Coast Region of the Ministry of Forests, order that:
 - (a) no application for Crown land may be made with respect to a Float Home or a Floating Home Community, within the South Coast Region as shown on the map in the attached Schedule A, except:
 - i. an application to renew, replace, assign, amend or modify an existing lease or license for a Float Home or Float Home Community; and
 - ii. an application for a new Float Home or Float Home Community on Powell Lake, Lois Lake, Frogpond Lake and Dodd Lake, as shown on the map in the attached Schedule A.
2. In this order, and as specified in the Floating Home Community Operational Policy: **Float Home** means a structure built on a flotation system, which is used for permanent or seasonal residential habitation and is not intended for navigation or as a navigational craft; and **Floating Home Community** means two or more floating homes that are physically connected to the shoreland and to each other by a common walkway or ramp, and which are serviced by a potable water system, electrical system, and sewage disposal system approved by the responsible authority.

This order is made under the authority of section 10.1 of the Land Act, [RSBC 1996] Ch. 245 and is effective March 1, 2023, to March 1, 2025.

January 25, 2023
Date

Tammy Hillyer

Minister of Forests
(or authorized signatory)

Tammy Hillyer
Director of Resource Authorizations
South Coast Region

Printed Name and Title (if authorized signatory)

(This part is for administrative purposes only and is not part of the Order.)

Authority under which Order is made:

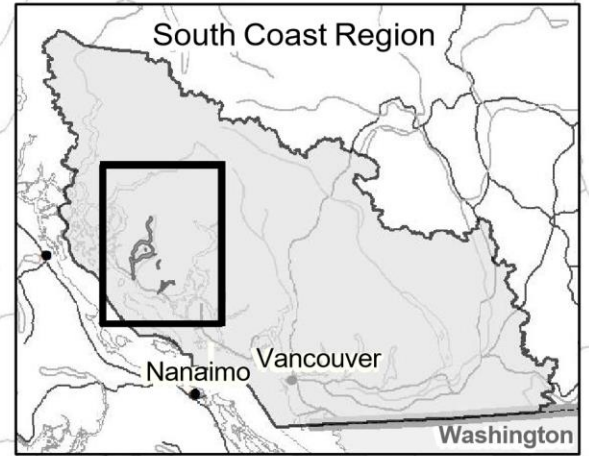
Act and section: Land Act section 10.1

Other: _____

Schedule A



Inset Map



FROGPOND LAKE

POWELL LAKE

DODD LAKE

Powell River

LOIS LAKE

