



MEDIA RELEASE

New tests show vast contamination

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 3, 2013

VICTORIA, BC – New tests confirm what local divers suspected: The CRD's raw sewage discharge is contaminating a vast marine area off Victoria. In a video "[CRD sewage outfall pollution in Victoria BC](#)" released August 11, commercial divers suspected sediments found over 5 kilometers from Victoria's outfalls were raw sewage from the discharge; the results confirm it.

Sediment samples taken from depths ranging from 50 to 65 feet at seven locations around Victoria Bight were tested for fecal coliforms in a University of Victoria laboratory. Because fecal coliforms are universally present in the digestive tract, the presence of these microorganisms in environmental samples is indicative of fecal contamination. The coliform levels of all sediment samples tested exceeded recreational (200 fecal coliforms/100 ml) and shellfish (14 fecal coliforms/100 ml) water standards. In fact, those taken at William Head, 10.5 kms from the Macaulay Point outfall, and Trial Island West, 2.6 kms from the Clover Point outfall, exceeded recreational standards by 1200%. Storm water outfalls were eliminated as a potential source of these fecal coliforms.

"The only heartening thing in this picture is the desire by community and industry leaders and the public to bring sewage treatment to the region as soon as possible," said Jim McIsaac of the T Buck Suzuki Foundation. "The daily discharge of toxins into our oceans is harmful and contaminating a vast marine area. It's clear that local government, industry and the public want to bring an end to this pollution," he added.

Some scientists and community leaders continue to claim that the ocean treats the sewage released through our outfalls; this is not what we've found. It is notable that scallop and sponge samples collected from William Head outside the current closure area were positive for fecal coliforms. The video referred to above and the results of the coliform tests on sediment and scallop samples collectively suggest that a significant amount of this raw sewage is contaminating a vast marine area, well into the Strait of Juan de Fuca. Our results indicate that this area is much larger than the current Environment Canada 60 sq km shellfish closure, and this closure should be immediately reviewed for expansion, likely from Race Rocks to Discovery Island, to protect human health. (see attached map)

"The funding is in place to move sewage treatment forward and now we have further evidence of the need," said Christianne Wilhelmson of the Georgia Strait Alliance. "The community has had years of input on multiple planning scenarios - it is now time to move forward with the plan, to start building and stop polluting."

The CRD pumps over 130 million litres a day of raw sewage into local waters and the prevailing current at the outfall takes the sewage both east into Haro Strait and west towards Race Rocks contaminating a

vast area of the regions' seabed. This daily raw sewage discharge includes 40,000 kilograms of solids that carry the contamination far and wide. With new national regulations mandating secondary sewage treatment, Victoria needs to have a system up and running before 2020.

Georgia Strait Alliance (www.GeorgiaStrait.org), formed in 1990, is the only citizens' group working to protect and restore the marine environment and promote the sustainability of Georgia Strait, its adjoining waters and communities, the place where 70% of British Columbians live, work and play.

The T. Buck Suzuki Foundation (www.bucksuzuki.org) was founded in 1981 by commercial fishermen and environmentalists to protect habitat, prevent pollution, and promote sustainable fisheries.

The David Suzuki Foundation (www.davidsuzuki.org) collaborates with Canadians from all walks of life, including government and business, to conserve our environment and find solutions that will create a sustainable Canada through science-based research, education and policy work.

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Youtube link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNR1dfcJn30>

Victoria's Raw Sewage Discharge

