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## **Feds denounced for staying pollution charge**

### **Metro Vancouver allowed to continue toxic dumping until 2030**

**October 11, 2007**

NORTH VANCOUVER, BC—Environmental groups are angry that the federal government has stayed a pollution charge against one of the largest water polluters in British Columbia, Metro Vancouver (formerly the Greater Vancouver Regional District or GVRD). A private prosecution had been launched by environmental groups regarding repeated failures of fish toxicity tests by the sewage effluent from Metro Vancouver's Lions Gate Sewage Treatment Plant, serving North and West Vancouver.

In August 2006, veteran environmental investigator Douglas Chapman and Ecojustice Canada (formerly Sierra Legal) laid a charge under the federal Fisheries Act against Metro Vancouver and the Province of BC over the Lions Gate plant, with the support of Georgia Strait Alliance, T. Buck Suzuki Foundation and the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union – CAW. These groups are asking Metro Vancouver to upgrade Lions Gate by no later than 2013. The Metro Vancouver Liquid Waste Management Plan has stalled this upgrade until 2030, and the Province has sanctioned 23 more years of toxic pollution by approving this Plan.

The Lions Gate plant discharges 33 billion litres of sewage effluent each year via an outfall just 500 metres east of the Capilano River. As the facility provides only primary treatment (which settles out some of the solid waste), Lions Gate effluent includes PCBs, pesticides, heavy metals and other toxic substances that pollute coastal waters and harm fish. Evidence filed in Court shows that from June 2001 to April 2006, Lions Gate failed monthly toxicity tests 17 times and received legal warnings from Environment Canada.

“The Federal Government’s decision to stop this prosecution means the foul mix of human waste and toxic chemicals will continue their way into Burrard Inlet and Georgia Strait,” said David Lane, Executive Director of T. Buck Suzuki Foundation. “The question now is will Metro Vancouver do the right thing and immediately start upgrading this plant.”

“The Provincial Court has already ruled that Mr. Chapman has enough evidence for this charge to go to trial,” said Ecojustice lawyer Lara Tessaro. “Concerned citizens should demand to know why the federal government has shielded these big, powerful polluters from prosecution.”

“While the federal government refuses to prosecute the Province and Metro Vancouver, the pollution of Burrard Inlet only gets worse,” said investigator Doug Chapman. “Metro Vancouver’s own test results show that Lions Gate effluent is still failing fish toxicity tests required by its provincial permit, most recently in August 2007.”

Represented by Ecojustice, Mr. Chapman has also laid a charge against Metro Vancouver and the Province for similar alleged violations of the federal Fisheries Act at the Iona Sewage Treatment Plant in Richmond.

The groups expect that the timelines for upgrading these two treatment plants can be expedited, because Metro Vancouver is about to review its Liquid Waste Management Plan this November. They are calling on Metro Vancouver politicians to show leadership in modernizing sewage treatment practices now.

For more on the [Private Prosecution Process](#) and [sewage background facts](#).

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