



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **RCBC Presents Concerns To GVRD On Ashcroft Landfill**

**Presentation by Natalie Zigarlick, Executive Director of the Recycling Council of British Columbia, on the Council's position on the proposed Ashcroft Ranch Landfill Project to the GVRD's Solid Waste Committee meeting Wednesday, October 06, 2004.**

Mister Chairman, committee members, my name is Natalie Zigarlick and I am pleased to be here to speak on behalf of the Recycling Council of British Columbia and to present the RCBC Board's position on the proposed Ashcroft Ranch Landfill Project.

As the largest regional district the GVRD's actions will have impact on the entire province. For this reason RCBC felt it important to comment on this particular issue. For the GVRD to realize a reduction in solid waste and a reduction in the costs of solid waste management nothing more is required than to follow the guidelines and programs already in place. The tools are there, they need to be used.

Despite the existence of bans on their disposal, significant quantities of hazardous and recyclable products are going to disposal each year in GVRD facilities. These materials include cardboard, newsprint, office paper, gypsum and hazardous wastes. Lack of enforcement has meant that the restrictions are often and easily ignored, resulting in unnecessary volumes of material going to landfill. GVRD figures show that nearly two-thirds of the region's waste going

to disposal each year is made up of easily recyclable and hazardous materials.

As well, significant quantities of products for which there are industry-funded stewardship programs are going to disposal each year in GVRD facilities. For example, BC's lead acid battery program requires consumers to pay an advance disposal fee, an extra charge, at the time of purchase, in order to appropriately deal with end of life vehicle batteries. By not ensuring that materials that should be diverted into a stewardship program are actually diverted, the GVRD (and all of its taxpayers) pays to send to landfill a material that should not be there AND by landfilling a toxic laden product the risks to our environment, and our health, are unnecessarily increased. A stewardship program for electronics is on the horizon. If we continued to landfill that material instead of steering it to its intended steward, toxics such as PBDE (fire retardants) that have been proven to be leached into the salmon we catch, will continue to contaminate our environment. Current stewardship programs, that do not cost the taxpayers of the GVRD anything, include those for beverage containers, for paint and flammable liquids, for household pesticides, for tires, for pharmaceuticals and as mentioned for lead acid batteries. Obviously when these materials are landfilled there is a cost to the taxpayers – unnecessarily.

Finally, other jurisdictions are pursuing aggressive programs to divert organics from disposal but the GVRD sends to disposal, in GVRD facilities, almost half a million tonnes of compostable materials each year. Failure to remove organics from the waste stream adds significant quantity to the volume being landfilled, and methane from the organics has 21 times the green house gas warming potential of carbon dioxide. By removing organics from the waste stream we would both save money and reduce our contribution to climate change, surely a win/win proposition.

The Recycling Council of British Columbia urges the GVRD Board to make a renewed

commitment to ensuring that there are effective policies in place to divert these materials from GVRD disposal facilities by the opening date of the proposed Ashcroft Ranch Landfill.

Committee members, landfills have huge economic impacts on the communities which they serve as well as environmental impacts on the communities in which they are sited. While a landfill may currently be a necessity to deal with some of the waste created in the lower mainland we have numerous programs to address much of this waste. Failure to use the tools at hand: bans and in-place stewardship programs, results in additional costs to the taxpayer and increases the negative impact on our environment. In addition, inappropriately landfilled materials such as organics increase volumes, resulting in a shorter life for the landfill.

RCBC recommends to the GVRD Board that a timeline to work towards a goal of Zero Waste disposal be set, and, in the short term, the Recycling Council of British Columbia strongly urges the GVRD Board to make a renewed commitment to ensure that there are effective policies in place by the opening date of the proposed Ashcroft Ranch Landfill to divert from GVRD disposal facilities materials that have been banned from landfill, materials for which product stewardship programs exist and organics.

RCBC would be pleased to address any concerns that you might have about our recommendations and I thank you for your attention to our presentation.

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