



For Immediate Release – Thursday March 5, 2026

**Statement from Mayor Linda Buchanan, City of North Vancouver and
Mayor Mike Little, District of North Vancouver**

**We Took the North Shore Wastewater Treatment Plant Issue to the Premier:
Here's Why This Matters To All Residents Of Metro Vancouver**

On March 5th, we sat down with Premier David Eby in Victoria to deliver a message on behalf of the 130,000 people we represent: the status quo at Metro Vancouver is no longer acceptable. North Shore residents cannot afford to wait any longer for change.

We brought three requests to the Premier: a public inquiry into the NSWWTP cost overruns under the Local Government Act; an arm's-length governance review of Metro Vancouver; and a fairness mechanism so that no municipality can ever again be held to a cost-sharing formula applied to costs that were never contemplated when the agreement was made.

The issues began with the North Shore Wastewater Treatment Plant - a project with a budget of \$700 million in 2017 and has since ballooned to \$3.86 billion.

Another, comparable wastewater treatment plant in BC is coming online to service roughly 50% more people at one-fifth of the cost of the North Shore Wastewater Treatment Plant.

North Shore residents face additional costs of \$590 up to \$1182 by 2028¹ per household, per year, for 30 years. Some cost impacts, including decommissioning and remediating the existing site, remain unquantified. These additional costs are higher than the City of North Vancouver could indebt itself under the Community Charter and would leave the District of North Vancouver with little flexibility to address its 10-year investment needs.

There is an important issue that deserves attention: the cost-sharing formula within Metro Vancouver for sewerage and drainage projects like the North Shore Wastewater Treatment Plant and the future Iona Wastewater Treatment Plant.

We are not disputing the formula for the original budget of \$700 million.

We are disputing Metro Vancouver treating a cost-sharing formula like a blank cheque.

¹ Special Joint Meeting, MVRD, MHHC, GVWD and GVS&DD, May 31st, 2024

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When Metro Vancouver approved its cost-sharing formula, municipalities could calculate their own costs from a defined budget and scope. There was no open-ended commitment to absorb whatever cost overruns Metro Vancouver incurs, no matter how far a project drifts.

The North Shore bears 37% of this project's costs while representing approximately 8% of Metro Vancouver's population.

It doesn't have to be this way. Among other regional districts here in BC, more collaborative models exist: changes to funding are taken back to partners for consideration by all.

The overrun alone on this particular Metro Vancouver project is more than \$3 billion above the original budget. We are calling for a revised equitable approach to distributing those extraordinary costs.

There is another issue that deserves public attention. In British Columbia, local governments must meet strict requirements before taking on significant long-term debt. These requirements protect residents so municipalities cannot commit them to decades of debt.

Metro Vancouver's sewerage borrowing operates under a different framework: a provincial statute that allows Metro to borrow and then assign the debt to member municipalities. No direct elector vote is required from the communities who will carry that debt for a generation.

Our residents bear the financial burden of Metro's borrowing decisions without the democratic safeguards that provincial law otherwise guarantees. That is a fundamental accountability gap.

North Shore municipalities and representatives raised concerns through every available channel. The response was inadequate and not constructive.

And the costs will keep on coming. Metro has a capital program that exceeds the capacity of its existing financial policy, so it's looking to adjust the policy rather than the program. Metro Vancouver's recently published draft 10-year outlook² indicates it has \$24.7 billion on the books – of which \$18.54 billion is for five capital projects. Over 55% of funding is coming from long term borrowing. If this plan stays on track, residents of Greater Vancouver can look forward to being assigned \$1 billion dollars in annual debt servicing costs by 2035.

Clearly, the organization cannot fix itself from within.

We are not walking away from Metro Vancouver. We depend on its services, and so do our residents. We are expecting for the governance to be fixed, not abandoned. Premier Eby has said publicly he would step in if Metro Vancouver failed to self-reform. It has failed. The time to act is now.

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² Board Meeting, MVRD, MHHC, GVWD and GVS&DD Feb 27, 2026