



North Shore Waterfront Industrial Association

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NEWS RELEASE

NSWIA RESPONDS TO NORTH VAN CITY MANAGER'S PAID AD

The City Manager of the City of North Van City has placed an ad in the North Shore News attacking the contents of a legitimate study on municipal costs and possible efficiencies, and impugned the motives of the sponsors of the study, the North Shore Waterfront Industrial Association. The ad is also on the municipal website.

This puts a whole new face on a municipal election campaign when the bureaucracy spends public funds defending their status quo. In detail, inaccuracies in this paid ad include:

The ad:

"You may have heard about the North Shore Waterfront industrial Association's claim that combining the City and District of North Vancouver would lead to savings and lower taxes"

Response:

The Study, found at www.betterway.ca, never mentions "combining", "merger", or "amalgamation". It is titled, "Potential for Voluntary Combining of Services and other Savings". To suggest that this is a "merger study" is quite misleading. The Study advocates simply that here are potential savings to be had by the two municipalities voluntarily working together to lower costs, and nothing more.

The ad:

"The report...does not recognize that the City and District share many services such as recreation, arts, public safety, and emergency services."

Response:

As sharing is already being done, why object to doing more of it, where it makes economic sense? That is all the MMK study is suggesting.

The ad:

"If we followed the report's example of Coquitlam or Delta, City service levels would fall dramatically."

Response:

Does the City have a study that substantiates this? Why has it not been released?

The Ad says the facts are:

"The City has the lowest property taxes on the North Shore, and one of the lowest in the region,"

Response:

Residential property taxes set by the City have increased at over 5% per year, or 22% over the past four years. At that rate, and including all components of the property tax, the property taxes on an average North Vancouver City house will increase by over \$1000 within six years! For a community increasingly made up of retirees on a fixed income, this should be a matter of concern.

The ad:

"The City has one of the lowest business tax rates in the Lower Mainland"

Response: Taxes rates on industry, on which the north shore depends for its long term economic sustainability, are about 11 times the residential rates, and likely the highest taxes on industrial land in North America. (See Bish study at www.betterway.ca) This level of taxes will eventually drive businesses large and small—and the high taxes they pay—out of the community, resulting in a residential tax structure like West Vancouver, which has no industry. On the other hand, some moderation of property taxes in the three business classes will see significant new investments, a broader tax base, and more revenues to both the City and District.

The Ad:

"It appears the local waterfront industry has launched its campaign in response to the City of North Vancouver's protest of a recent BC Assessment Appeal Board ruling in favour of waterfront industry."

Response:

Wrong. The research began in February, while the assessment decision, which really affects only one property, was in April. When it became clear that the report's findings raised very significant issues for citizens of North Vancouver City and District, it was decided to release it and inform voters during the municipal election campaign of its contents.

The ad:

"It should be noted the City's waterfront taxes have fallen significantly from \$4.9 million to \$3.3 million in three years."

Response:

While it may be factual to say that revenues from waterfront taxes are down, this statement is deliberately misleading. To preserve waterfront jobs and encourage new investment in the port sector, the Province decided to step in with a 'cap'. However, the Province has fully compensated North Vancouver City for its loss of revenues from this adjustment. Other major industries on the North Shore, such as chemical plants and shipyards were not affected by the 'cap', and continue to pay among the highest tax rates in North America

For more information:

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