

Omineca Mobile Home Park

June 15, 2018

Attention: Rental Housing Task Force

I feel a need to reach out to you in regards to the ongoing issues with rental housing in BC. I am an owner of a mobile home park in Vanderhoof, British Columbia. The tenants in the park own their mobile homes but rent the pad space for them. We provide water, sewer and garbage removal as part of the rent. The average pad rent in the park is under three hundred dollars per month. The bulk of that rent actually goes towards water tax by both the district of Vanderhoof and the local water purveyor - North Side.

Last year we, faced an astronomical increase from the water purveyor. Our annual water bill for our 36 space park is now almost \$28000 per annum. More than 30% of our total gross income on the north side of the town goes to just the water purveyor alone. The other side of the town pays substantially less in water taxes as they are controlled by the district. However, we also pay their water tax as part of the annual property tax fees - so essentially we are paying for water twice. In addition, the water on the north side is contaminated with heavy metals and arsenic - at levels higher than the allowable World Health Organization standard. Testing is done once a year, but the contamination has not been eliminated. The majority of seniors with compromised health conditions live on the north side of the town. In addition the hospital is also serviced by the water purveyor. I have included some copies of former notices I have sent to the former government and the tenants in regard to that particular issue. It does affect the health and wealth of our tenants so I do feel it is important to bring to your attention.

Landlord owners also face being forced to sign lease agreements for the mobile homes that are purchased and that are permitted tenancy in the parks. Many mobile homes are older and do offer affordable housing alternatives. However, because the mobile homes are considered transitory homes, their equitable value can drop over time. This leads to a situation where the mortgage is worth more than the mobile home itself. When a tenant fails to pay their mortgage (and their rent), the bank is able to dismiss the mortgage, leaving the landlord with the bills. Landlords are required to pay the outstanding taxes, and fees associated with the abandoned units. The bank is then able to walk away from the unit without taking on any of the responsibility of resale, pad rent, or upkeep. It is the landlord who then has to pay for the abandoned unit to be insured, monitored, etc. Throughout this there is no benefit to the landlord. If the home has older electrical wiring the landlord would then also be responsible for bringing the unit back to code before even being able to re-list the unit. Often the older units are not worth anything and the cost of removal and destruction of the unit (which

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can cost several thousand dollars) is the responsibility of the landlord. During this time the loss of rent of the pad itself is put back to the owner of the park.

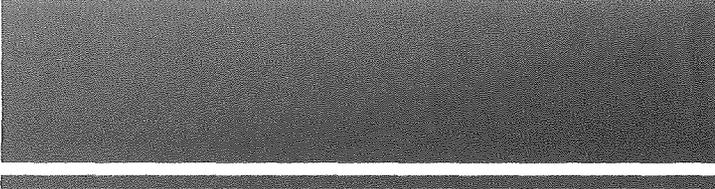
There is another issue that needs to be addressed when it comes to pets. Many parks (such as ours) have a pet restriction. I have had a rise of service animal requests. People have claimed their pets are therapy pets, and have been able to circumvent our larger breed restriction because their pet is a "therapy" pet. They supply a written letter from a therapist or a doctor, and we are told we must not discriminate because of those issues. The tenants are put in a position of power where the pet rules no longer apply to them, despite them signing the pet agreement prior to tenancy.

There are other issues as well. I wanted to add the above for consideration and discussion with the task force. If there is an opportunity to meet in person so I may discuss these issues and give voice to the concerns of mobile home park landlords and owners, I would be happy to do so. I reside in Tsawwassen and can meet in Victoria should it be necessary.

Regards



Nicholas Harrison, PhD



Omineca Mobile Home Park

October 4th, 2016

URGENT ISSUE REGARDING WATER FROM NORTHSIDE SERVICES

Yesterday it came to my attention that NORTHSIDE WATER SERVICE LTD has made an application for a substantial water rate increase to subsidize a fifteen year project to make their water potable. At the moment toxic arsenic levels are approximately 11 parts per billion. The World Health Organization's highest limit for toxicity level allowance for any human is at 10 ppb. Northside is trying to remedy this, but at an enormous cost - a cost, that if it is approved in 2017, will be unfortunately passed on to you in 2018.

To pay for this, Northside will be increasing the monthly water rate per mobile home from \$42 per month (It was \$45 for home owners) to \$61 per month. Our rent increase was mailed out before we had this information and we will not be requesting an additional amount to cover the costs Northside will be charging in 2017. However, in 2018 please be prepared to see your rent increase to reflect this higher water rate. It is unfortunate that this may be the case. That means in addition to the allowable percentage rate of increase, an additional levy of approximately \$19 per unit will be added to the rent to cover Northside's proposed project. If their rate is higher or lower it will be adjusted in accordance with that rate.

I have contacted your MLA John Rustad (Phone: (250) 567-6820 - email: john.rustad.mla@leg.bc.ca), Mayor Gerry Thiessen (Phone: 250-567-4711 - email: mayor@district.vanderhoof.ca), the water comptroller of British Columbia (Chris.Mcmillan@gov.bc.ca), the Omineca Express, and Northside to express my concern of the increase as this affects us all - especially those living on fixed or low incomes. Unfortunately they have not returned my calls or emails. I urge you to contact your MLA, the Mayor, Northside and other groups to voice your concerns. The North Side of Vanderhoof pays approximately three times more for water service than the rest of the Village, yet we are taxed for the water use on the other side as well. We are living in times when every dollar counts. If you are concerned about the exorbitant price of water service on the North Side of Vanderhoof, it is time to let Northside Water, The Deputy Comptroller of Water Rights, Northern Health, the media, the Province and your village council know.

I have enclosed the notice from Northside Water Service that I was able to find on the internet despite asking them to email it to me directly - at this time something they still have yet to do. Please read the information and make your voice heard. Clean water should be an equal right for everyone in Vanderhoof, not just an affordable perk for people who do not live on the North Side.

Regards

Nicholas Harrison, PhD

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I have included attachments from the water purveyor, the health bulletin on arsenic as well as our own notice to the residents of our mobile home park. Clean water should be a right for every Canadian, but not at drastically higher rate for some over others.

Regards

Nicholas Harrison
Omineca Mobile Home Park

URGENT WATER ISSUE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

I am reaching out to all of you in hopes of bringing an urgent CLEAN WATER issue to your collective attention.

There is a small district - VANDERHOOF British Columbia that is divided by the Nechako River. On the south side the residents of the district are supplied filtered and clean water that is safe for drinking, cooking and washing. The north side is on the other side of the river and has water provided by a water purveyor - Northside Services. Every resident - north and south pays for the water service from the district BUT the north side has to also pay a water levy at a much higher rate. This creates a two tier system of water delivery. To make matters worse, for several years it has become known that the north side's water is contaminated with high levels of arsenic and manganese - both of which are known to cause damage to the human central nervous system as well as forms of cancer. The arsenic levels alone are above the World Health and Canadian Health highest level allowed for human consumption.

Recently, Northside alerted residents that they would be finally treating the water - but at a very large cost to the residents of the north side of Vanderhoof. Current rates will rise from \$41 and \$45 per month per apartment, house and mobile home to approximately \$61 per month - and the system will take several years to complete.

We had attempted to make a well for our park but we were informed that the arsenic and manganese removed would have to be stored in containers and removed from the site. There has been no information what would be happening to the filtered water from Northside Services. It would be very toxic to flush the sediment back into the water system.

While it is very important for clean water to be available for everyone this cost is extremely high and only affects the residents who live on the north side of Vanderhoof. Several seniors, low income families, and the hospital are all located on the north side and will find the rates damaging to their fixed and low incomes. Our mobile home park will be forced to pay approximately an additional \$20,000 per year to Northside alone for this water project - our rents are on average \$270 per month currently and now will have to be raised substantially to cover the water costs from Northside.

Clean water should not be so expensive and exclusive to only the south side of the Vanderhoof. There is a prejudice towards those who live on the north side and must pay for water that they cannot use on the south side in addition to the water service on the north side. It is a bizarre system of control that does nothing but harm the citizens of the north side.