



COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE REPORT

TO: Chair and Directors

SUBJECT: Septic Smart Rebate Program

DESCRIPTION: Report from Ben Van Nostrand, General Manager, Environmental and Utility Services, dated May 14, 2025.

RECOMMENDATION: THAT: the Committee of the Whole recommend the Board support the delivery of the CSR's Septic Smart Rebate Program.

BACKGROUND:

The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the CSR's plans to implement the Septic Smart rebate program related to the CSR's recently updated Liquid Waste Management Plan (LWMP).

On February 28, 2024, the CSR submitted updated LWMPs to the Ministry of Environment and Parks for approval. The process to update the plans began in 2022 and followed the Ministry's guidelines for updating LWMPs. Urban Systems Engineering was hired to support the CSR's review process, with the focus of the review being an update on programs designed to support responsible maintenance of private septic systems. The CSR's guidance documents on Septic Smart were reviewed and updated and a Septic Smart Rebate program was proposed. Public feedback during the consultation phase of the review indicated backing for financial support for homeowners to inspect, maintain and improve their septic systems.

On March 10, 2025, the CSR received letters from the Ministry of Environment and Parks indicating that the amendments submitted for the four LWMPs were approved and that "a comprehensive LWMP review and amendment process" be completed by the CSR and submitted to the Ministry on or before September 30, 2030. In an effort to advance the measures approved in the updated LWMPs, staff have begun the work to implement a Septic Smart rebate program.

The following is a summary of the information contained within the CSR's proposed Septic Smart Rebate program:

Septic System Maintenance Overview

- Many property owners living within the LWMP service areas have underground septic chambers, which means that individual owners are responsible for conducting regular maintenance and repairs to their systems.
- Just like maintaining a vehicle, preventative maintenance is key to prolonging the life of your septic system and avoiding costly repairs in the long term. Regular pump-outs and inspections will maintain the foundation of the system and decrease the likelihood of system failure.
- It is not just about saving money - properly maintaining your septic system is crucial to protecting the health of our community and environment. Untreated wastewater from a failing system can contaminate groundwater and drinking water sources, posing serious health and environmental risks.

Rebate Program

- Rebate programs can be a great incentive for property owners to take the necessary steps to ensure that their septic systems are functioning properly.

- The CSRD is considering a septic system rebate program that is aimed at encouraging property owners to maintain the health of their septic systems. This is an important step in protecting the natural environment and the health of our communities.
- The proposed rebate program is designed to mitigate the costs associated with the upkeep of individual septic systems. It proposes that the CSRD will cover up to 75% of the eligible expenses, subject to a maximum amount. This shared investment approach will create accessible and affordable maintenance options for property owners.
- The rebates were carefully selected after consulting with other regional districts with experience in rebate programs, engaging with septic system experts, and considering how to incentivize homeowners to go beyond basic septic maintenance.

Costs

- The rebate program is an add-on function for the liquid waste service and has been proposed without additional tax implications for the first three years. After three years, the program will be re-evaluated, and any tax funding and tax implications will be considered at that time. Each year, the total budget for rebates is set and once it is exhausted the rebates will cease until new funds are available. The following amounts were approved in the 2025 budgeting process:
 - Electoral Area E - \$5,000
 - North Shuswap (Area F) – \$5,500
 - Seymour Arm (Area F) – \$2,000
 - South Shuswap (Area C/G) - \$20,000*

*Administratively split 40/60 between Area C/G

Eligible Maintenance Activities

- The rebate program includes the following maintenance activities:
 - up to \$400 to install risers (a portal for ease of access to the septic tank)
 - up to \$500 to install or replace distribution boxes (centralized box within septic field that equally distributes wastewater into connecting pipes)
 - up to \$300 to conduct a complete system inspection by an accredited ROWP
 - up to \$200 to install an effluent filter
- Pump-outs are a crucial component of septic system maintenance; however, it is not eligible for rebates through this program. This is considered a standard practice that homeowners are expected to undertake regularly. Instead, the limited resources available for rebates have been allocated to incentivize homeowners to perform more advanced and essential maintenance.

NEXT STEPS:

Given the Ministry has approved the amended CSRD LWMPs, which contained the recommendation to develop a Septic Smart Rebate program, staff are in the process of implementing the program. To date, budgets for the delivery of the program have been approved in the four liquid waste budgets, a CSRD webpage has been developed, and forms including information, application and financial claim have been drafted. Environmental Services has collaborated with Financial Services to ensure that rebates will be issued to homeowners upon approval.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	2025-06-05_COW_EUS_Liquid_Waste_Management_Plan_Update.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	May 29, 2025

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

No Signature - Task assigned to Jodi Pierce was completed by delegate Sheena Haines

Jodi Pierce

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Sham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jennifer" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Sham".

Jennifer Sham

No Signature - Task assigned to John MacLean was completed by assistant Jennifer Sham

John MacLean