

The Honourable Kevin Krueger,
Minister of Community Development
P.O. Box 9065 Stn Prov Govt
Room 124
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Kreuger,

January 27th 2009

Eligibility for Office Restrictions

Thank you for your response to my question last week, when you addressed the Local Government Leadership Academy. My question pertained to the current legislation which disqualifies certain individuals from running for elected office by virtue of their employment in a Regional District.

Shortly before the municipal elections last November it came to light that one of the candidates for the office of Mayor in our Village would be ineligible to hold that office and remain in his employment with the GVRD. This information came to light at a time when it was too late to nominate another candidate, so that in effect the election was uncontested.

These events caused considerable controversy within our community. The disqualified candidate had for the previous twelve years been a highly valued and respected member of council of the Village of Anmore. The nature of his employment was never concealed and was widely known within the community. At the same time his employer was fully cognizant of his status as an elected official of a municipality. The fact of his ineligibility came as a surprise to everyone – including the Village electoral officer.

We believe that the current wording of the Act creates a circumstance that was unintended: that a respected citizen with excellent leadership qualities is prevented from serving his (her) community simply on account of their employment. We understand that there may have been an intent to avoid real or perceived issues of conflict of interest when the Act was drafted in this manner, but we do not believe such concerns are justified. To whatever extent matters of conflict of interest may arise when such an employee is elected to municipal office, we believe that the existing conflict of interest provisions are sufficient to address them.

Accordingly we would ask you to consider as a matter of some urgency an amendment to the legislation that would remove the limitation described.

Yours sincerely,