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Liquid Waste Services  
Metro Vancouver  
Metrotower III  
4730 Kingsway,  
Burnaby, BC  
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June 12, 2019

Re: Iona Island Lagoons Dewatering and Bird Habitat

Hi Lena,

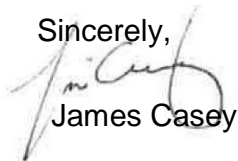
Thank you for the ongoing engagement with the birding community. We appreciate that staff and consultants are receptive, knowledgeable and working towards plans for IWWTP that include options for tertiary treatment, advanced technologies, biological nutrient recovery, wetland/bird habitat enhancement, connections to Fraser River estuary and river flow, and opportunities for connecting visiting public with the nature of this Important Bird Area.

However, we are concerned that the four lagoons will be drained over the next two to four years, but that potential creation of new wetlands would likely not occur until near the end of the project, that is, likely not for ten years. The four lagoons provide excellent habitat for thousands of birds and our concern is the near decade loss of wetland habitat. See the attached description we have compiled on the importance of the lagoons as bird habitat.

We would like the timeline related to the wetland enhancement component of this project to be adjusted to avoid a multiyear loss of bird habitat. We suggest that as soon as the geotechnical studies confirm a location for the new plant, that wetland enhancement becomes a focus with construction for the new wetlands to be scheduled to coincide with the draining of the last two lagoons.

We request that you please arrange a meeting with our groups to discuss adjusting the planned timing of wetland enhancement and other relevant steps to avoid, mitigate and offset a loss of bird habitat.

Sincerely,



James Casey

Bev Ramey

Bird Studies Canada

Nature Vancouver

Copied,

Myles Lamont – Wild Research

Andrew Huang – Wild Research

Anne Murray – Delta Naturalist Society

Catherine Jardine – Bird Studies Canada

Colin Clasen – Nature Vancouver

## Attachment 1

### Summary of Bird Usage at Iona Island Lagoons based on eBird and Iona Island Bird Observatory Data

The eBird database recognizes a hotspot specific to the Iona Island sewage lagoons.<sup>1</sup> Data associated with this particular hotspot date back to 1971 providing evidence of the valuable bird habitat offered by the lagoons. In the last 10 years there have been there have been 189 bird species recorded using the lagoons. Large flocks of 2000 Northern Pintail, 1000 American Wigeon and 2000 Dunlin r have been recorded within the lagoons.

Fifteen Federal Species at Risk species have been documented using the lagoons. In particular the lagoons are known to be popular foraging habitat for Barn Swallows with 450 Barn Swallows recorded foraging over the lagoons in 2018.

The lagoons are also used by raptors with 5 hawk species, 1 SARA listed owl species and Bald Eagles all having been observed at the lagoons. A couple of Bald Eagle nests have been documented in close proximity to the lagoons.

Directly adjacent to the lagoons is the Iona Island Bird Observatory (IIBO) where banding programs have documented the area being heavily utilized by migrating warblers. For instance in the spring of 2012, 1445 Yellow-rumped Warblers were documented and in the spring of 2013, 677 Wilson's Warblers were documented.<sup>2</sup> In 2018, 5700 individual birds were captured by IIBO, comprised of 55 different species. An analysis showed that the longer warblers stayed at Iona, the more fat they gained, which is an essential source of energy to fuel their migrating journey<sup>3</sup>. This shows that Iona is a critical stopover site for migratory birds.

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<sup>1</sup> eBird Iona Island Inner Ponds hotspot <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L339172?yr=all&m=&rank=lrec>

<sup>2</sup> WildResearch, (2016) Iona Island Bird Observatory 2010-2015 Cumulative Report. Online at: [http://wildresearch.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/WildResearch\\_IIBO\\_Cumulative\\_Report\\_2010-2015\\_FINAL.pdf](http://wildresearch.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/WildResearch_IIBO_Cumulative_Report_2010-2015_FINAL.pdf)