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CRD asks medical officer for well-water assessment; [Final Edition][Richard Watts](#). [Times - Colonist](#). Victoria, B.C.: [May 24, 2001](#). pg. B.1.FRO**Other available formats:** [Abstract](#)**Find more documents like this:****People:**

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[Michael M'Gonigle] complained the Capital Health Region has already examined the **Senanus** water issue. It concluded the **Senanus** water is unfit, a conclusion M'Gonigle and others like him dispute.

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Victoria's top medical officer is being asked to help settle a controversial water issue that has confounded Central Saanich for nearly 15 years.

Directors with the Capital Regional District voted Wednesday to ask Dr. Richard Stanwick, the regional medical health officer, to provide a report on the extent of the health hazard faced by residents of about 60 homes around **Senanus** Drive who rely on wells for their water.

Stanwick will only review existing reports from previous studies. He will not be conducting new tests. But CRD directors hope to get a definitive idea on how bad things are for **Senanus** residents.

In Central Saanich, the situation has degenerated into an issue where residents contend the rural ambience of the area is at risk from development. The last time the issue arose with the local council, it dead-locked in a tie and nothing was done.

Senanus residents say their water is unfit for consumption. It rots pipes, tanks and taps and even kills houseplants. They have studies and health warnings to prove it. They want their area hooked up to the municipal water supply, a project that will cost an estimated \$850,000.

On the other side, however, are people who worry that a supply of municipal water will only lead to development. They have their own studies showing the **Senanus** water is OK.

On Wednesday after the CRD vote, **Senanus** resident Gordon Denford said he is confident Stanwick will reach the conclusion that his water is unfit.

"We feel all the data is there," he said. "At least we can get some independence into this whole thing."

But on the other side are people like Michael M'Gonigle, who lives near **Senanus** Drive and who chaired a task force on the water issue.

M'Gonigle complained the Capital Health Region has already examined the **Senanus** water issue. It concluded the **Senanus** water is unfit, a conclusion M'Gonigle and others like him dispute.

"The problem is the Capital Health Region, in its previous studies, has not done a scientific job at all," he said.

But directors of the Capital Regional District decided a review and report from Stanwick was the best option they had.

Some of the directors said the CRD was sticking its nose into Central Saanich's local business. However, the majority agreed to send for a health review, especially after they were instructed there might be legal liability if the region did nothing.

Some directors also said a clear issue over water quality and human health was becoming muddied by fears of development.

"It concerns me when I hear some people, rather than talking about the quality of the water, they talk about the community plan and not wanting development," said Langford Coun. Denise Blackwell. "If there is a genuine water quality problem, the municipality has other means to control development."

Saanich Coun. Bob Gillespie said the CRD must at least find out how bad things really are.

"There is a concern about the water quality here," said Gillespie. "If this is a health issue I want to know the extent of it."

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