



Tsartlip First Nation requests halt to water project until consulted

By Andrew MacLeod February 2, 2009 03:02 pm

The Tsartlip First Nation is adding its voice to oppose a [controversial](#) water line planned for an area north of Victoria.

“We were not informed by you of this project,” Chief Wayne Morris and the council for the Tsartlip First Nation wrote in a January 30, 2009 letter to the Central Saanich mayor and council. “We have received copies of documents from Western Economic Diversification Canada, indicating that you were supposed to have consulted with us on this project.”

The federal and provincial governments have granted over \$1 million to the municipality to provide water service to 64 homes in a well-to-do area of the Saanich Peninsula. The bylaws allowing for the water line to proceed are on the [agenda](#) for this evening's Central Saanich council meeting.

The chief and council asked that Central Saanich hold the bylaws until they are consulted. “If you choose to proceed, we will take action accordingly.”

Mayor Jack Mar was unavailable before posting time.

The Tsartlip letter said Mount Newton is sacred. So is the point where the water service is planned. “It contains remains of our ancestors,” the letter said. “No work or plans of any kind on [Mount Newton] or Henderson point is to move ahead unless we are informed and have the opportunity to ensure that our sacred sites and our ancestors are in no way disturbed as a result of your activities there.”

(The letter says the Tsartlip name for Mount Newton is WSANEC, though Central Saanich councilor and Tsartlip member Adam Olsen said in an interview the letter is incorrect. The mountain is known as LAUWELNEW, he said.)

Members of the Mount Newton Neighbourhood Association also oppose extending the water line. “There's been very little public process,” said area resident Lori Waters. Senior governments have based their grant and approvals on erroneous information provided by the municipality and have failed to give the project proper scrutiny, she said. “I don't feel like I can trust our governments anymore.”

Andrew MacLeod is The Tyee's Legislative Bureau Chief in Victoria. Reach him [here](#).

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