

**Sent:** Thursday, September 23, 2004 4:39 PM

**Subject:** TROUBLED WATERS IN YOUR NECK OF THE WOODS

ATTN: AQUATHIN CANADA DEALERS

## **Report says Canada's coastal cities worst sewage polluters**

**September 2004**

*U.S. Water News Online*

**VICTORIA, British Columbia** -- Canada's coastal cities rank among the world's worst offenders when it comes to spewing billions of gallons of dirty, stinking and dangerous untreated sewage into open waters, says a report released by environmental groups.

Victoria, Montreal, St. John, Halifax, Charlottetown and St. John's continue to use their surrounding waters as large toilet bowls to discharge human waste and toxic chemical cocktails, with little or no sewage treatment, says the report which graded 22 cities across Canada.

The report was compiled by the Sierra Legal Defense Fund on behalf of the Georgia Strait Alliance, the Labor Environmental Alliance Society and the T. Buck Suzuki Foundation.

Calgary, Edmonton and Whistler were issued top marks by the environmental groups for upgrading their sewage systems to full 100 percent tertiary treatment.

Quebec City, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Hamilton, Toronto and Brandon were among other Canadian cities that received improved grades for major improvements to their sewage treatment systems over the past three years.

"The casual assumption that whatever we pour down the drain and flush down the toilet is suitably treated before being released into the environment is false," the report said.

Many of Canada's sewage systems are dumping grounds for all manner of wastes and must be cleaned up, the report said.

An Environment Canada spokesman said Ottawa and the provinces are working toward developing a joint wastewater treatment program by 2006.

"All the provinces and territories have agreed to work on that," said Claude Fortin, chief of the municipal wastewater effluent division.

"Then we could have those national standards," he said. "We could all agree as to how we should manage this sector."

Environment Canada will regulate the proposed national standards, Fortin said.

The report found Victoria's sewage outfalls discharged 2,920 metric tons of oil and grease, 9 metric tons of copper and 2.5 metric tons of cyanide into the ocean over a two-year period.

Lead, silver, mercury and other potential harmful chemicals were also found in the Victoria discharges.

Tests on effluent from treated sewage in Toronto in 2003 found a soup of chemicals, the study said.

"We're still failing to meet standards that they would have in the United States and Europe," Margot Venton, a spokeswoman for the Sierra Legal Defense Fund, said at a news conference in Victoria.

Montreal, which received an "F" grade, dumps 360 billion liters of raw sewage into the St. Lawrence River annually.

Dawson City, Yukon received an "E" grade because it continues to discharge 1 billion liters of raw sewage annually. But the E is an improvement over its previous F grade because the tiny community is awaiting funding to upgrade its sewage treatment.

Victoria didn't even rank a letter grade due to its decision to continue dumping 34 billion liters of untreated sewage into the ocean each year, the report said.

"It's time something were done about it," said Peter Ronald of the Vancouver Island-based Georgia Strait Alliance.

Killer whales and seals already have high levels of potential deadly compounds like PCBs, he said.

"These toxic chemicals play havoc with sea birds, mammals and other sensitive marine life and ultimately are consumed by humans through the fish and shellfish we eat," the report said.