

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

July 31, 2006

The Editor
Times Colonist

Re: "Little evidence in sewage case," July 30.

I'm rather puzzled by the *Times Colonist* editorial claiming that science does not support the need for sewage treatment for B.C.'s capital city.

The editorial does acknowledge unacceptable levels of seabed contamination caused by accumulations of mercury, lead and other heavy metals but then makes the surprising suggestion that Victoria shouldn't treat its sewage like other B.C. communities are required to do.

It seems the editorial writers are comforted by what they believe is an absence of an imminent threat to human health from the mercury and lead accumulations.

But as noted by columnist Les Leyne on July 25 in this newspaper, I'm also concerned about recent findings of substandard water quality outside the initial dilution zone near Macaulay Point, not just accumulations of heavy metals on the sea floor.

On July 12, 2006, the board of the Capital Regional District received a report from an independent scientific panel. Your newspaper summed up this report with the front page headline, "You can't keep dumping."

While some may argue that only human health concerns should be considered, I consider it my job to also pay attention to the health of the environment.

That's why I have instructed the Capital Regional District to submit a plan for sewage treatment by June 30, 2007.

Sincerely,

Barry Penner,
Minister of Environment