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**Cc:** [REDACTED] [Paul Brent](#); [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Addition to Agenda Package - Skana Water Service Committee - April Meeting  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2026 8:04:05 AM  
**Attachments:** [FinalSkanaWaterProposal.pdf](#)

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Hello all:

Residents of the Skana Water System have prepared a proposal for an alternative approach to the capital plan of the failed 2025 financing petition. They have presented this to the committee members for serious consideration and inclusion in the Skana Water capital plan going forward. Their proposal is backed by a tremendous amount of work and research and deserves fair consideration.

Please include the attached document in the April meeting and ensure the document is issued in the meeting agenda package. The intent is to come out of the meeting with a collaborative path forward to incorporate the good work in this proposal so that the necessary upgrades to the Skana system can be completed as quickly and affordably as possible.

Thanks in advance from the committee and the community.

Warren Korol

Sent from my iPhone

# Skana Water District – Background, Rationale, and Alternative Proposal

## Executive Summary

The ratepayers of the Skana Water District (SWD) have been in discussion about the renewal of the tanks and infrastructure for many years, preceding the recent petition and continuing to the present. Through informal conversation and following a public information meeting with CRD staff and a community meeting that did not include CRD some elements of consensus have emerged for a lower-cost, phased alternative using polyethylene (poly) tanks. A community petition to proceed with steel tank replacement did not receive sufficient support, largely due to the scale of projected costs and long-term financial impacts on a small ratepayer base.

This document sketches a practical, phased poly tank replacement plan that provides context for this option and outlines criteria that reflect community priorities. The ratepayers expectation of the water system includes safe and reliable water in a cost effective, economical and sustainable manner. The proposed approach maintains technical reliability while reducing financial burden, improving adaptability to climate change and technological advances, and allowing for future increases in storage capacity. SWD residents are eager to work collaboratively with the CRD to refine estimates, confirm technical requirements, and identify a mutually acceptable path forward.

The residents of the Skana Water District respectfully submit the following proposal for consideration in keeping with the CRD mission to work openly, inclusively and efficiently with residents.

*“Our mission is to serve the public good, plan for the future, and help build a livable, sustainable, and resilient region. We work across municipal and electoral area boundaries to deliver services to residents regionally, sub-regionally and locally, through an inclusive, efficient and open organization.*

*To continue embracing cooperation, innovation and bold leadership in the delivery of services that contribute to a liveable, sustainable, and resilient region. We will continue fostering a region where all residents are included and have access to a quality of life that is fulfilling and where there is a healthy environment for current and future generations. — Capital Regional District*

**Note on cost figures:** The figures referenced in this document are target values developed through preliminary research, review of publicly available information, and discussions with individuals experienced in small water system infrastructure projects. Several SWD residents

are willing to work with CRD staff and the Water Board to refine and confirm costs as the project advances.

## 1. Introduction and Purpose

The Skana Water District (SWD) is providing this document to outline the rationale for reconsidering the CRD's proposed replacement of two existing 46 m<sup>3</sup> steel water storage tanks. Following the unsuccessful petition to proceed with steel tank replacement, this proposal offers:

- A concise overview of local system context;
- Decision-making criteria grounded in community priorities; and
- A feasible, phased alternative centered on poly tank infrastructure.

This proposal seeks to support a collaborative community-aligned path forward that balances technical reliability, fiscal responsibility and future adaptability.

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## 2. Background

The Skana Water District is a small community water system on Mayne Island, British Columbia, serving 54 connected users and approximately 20 unconnected parcels. Historically, system upgrade costs have been shared across both groups.

The system currently relies on two horizontal steel storage tanks, each with a capacity of 46 m<sup>3</sup>. These tanks are at end of life and require replacement to ensure continued system reliability and neighbourhood water security.

The CRD's 2025 proposal replaces the existing tanks with vertical steel units of equivalent capacity and an anticipated service life of approximately 50 years. This approach closely mirrors an earlier CRD initiative from 2016, which identified three options:

- Repair existing tanks – \$73,000
- Replace with poly tanks – \$213,000
- Replace with steel tanks – \$400,000

Although a referendum was planned and budgeted for in 2017, it was not carried out. Nearly a decade later, the community is presented with a single option—steel tank replacement—now estimated at approximately \$940,000. When combined with the proposed upgrade of the secondary well (\$160,000), the total project cost reaches approximately \$1.1 million (±50%). This level of investment was rejected by a majority of ratepayers.

It is also noteworthy that CRD minutes of meetings with the Skana Water Board indicate discussion of tank replacement as early as 2005, with limited progress over the subsequent two decades.

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### **3. Criteria for Selecting a Replacement System**

While steel tanks may be technically robust, technical performance alone is insufficient for decision-making in a small, ratepayer-funded system. The following criteria reflect the priorities and constraints of the Skana Water District community.

#### **a. Cost and Long-Term Affordability**

The projected cost of steel tanks places a significant financial burden on households within a small water system. A 25-year amortization period substantially increases total costs due to interest, compounding long-term impacts on homeowners. Lower-cost infrastructure reduces both immediate assessments and lifetime household expenditures.

Following the failed petition, the CRD also indicated its intention to proceed with piping upgrades within the district, further increasing anticipated costs to residents. Selecting a fiscally conservative option for tank replacement is therefore a prudent and responsible approach.

#### **b. Climate Change and System Adaptability**

The Skana water system was designed in the 1970s, when climatic conditions were more stable. Increasing drought frequency, aquifer stress, and seasonal variability now require infrastructure that can adapt over time. Systems with shorter life cycles (20–30 years) allow communities to respond more effectively to emerging climate realities.

#### **c. Technological Change**

Advances in water system monitoring, automation, and treatment are accelerating. Lower-cost components that can be replaced or upgraded more frequently reduce the risk of locking the community into outdated technology for multiple generations.

#### **d. Option to Increase Storage Capacity**

Prolonged drought conditions in the Gulf Islands make increased storage capacity a strategic priority. The proposed steel replacement maintains existing capacity, whereas poly tank systems offer modular expansion. Additional tanks can be added in future phases without major structural reconfiguration or prohibitive costs.

#### **e. Site Access and Installation Practicality**

The existing tank site presents logistical challenges. Transporting and installing large steel tanks is complex, costly, and disruptive. poly tanks are lighter, easier to transport, safer to install, and more flexible for future reconfiguration.

When evaluated against these criteria—cost, flexibility, adaptability, expandability, and constructability—poly tanks emerge as the most balanced and practical solution. This option was previously recognized by the CRD in 2016 and remains well-suited to current conditions.

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## 4. Proposed Phased Project Plan

A phased approach spreads costs over time, minimizes long-term borrowing, and reduces financial risk for residents. It also aligns with the considered project timeline, as CRD work is not expected to begin for at least two years. Phasing may additionally allow smaller, local contractors to participate, supporting the Mayne Island economy.

### Phase One – Year 1

#### Objectives

- Remove existing horizontal steel tanks and saddle foundations.
- Complete engineering assessment and construct reinforced concrete foundations.
- Purchase, transport, anchor, and commission two 46 m<sup>3</sup> poly tanks.

#### Scope

- Structural engineering and soil assessment
- Removal of steel tanks and foundations
- Excavation and construction of reinforced concrete foundations
- Purchase and installation of poly tanks
- Temporary poly tank rental if required during construction
- Piping upgrades between pump house and tanks, if necessary

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$432,000 (including contingency)

**Estimated Cost per Household (74 participants):** \$5,837.84

This target estimate reflects conservative assumptions based on the 2016 CRD poly tank estimate, adjusted upward to account for inflation, increased material costs, and contingency allowances.

### Phase Two – Year 2

#### Objectives

- Upgrade the secondary well to improve system resilience and operational reliability.
- Add additional storage capacity, if feasible.

## Scope

- CRD-specified secondary well upgrade

**Estimated Project Cost:** \$160,000

**Estimated Cost per Household (74 participants):** \$2,162.17

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**Potential Total Project Cost:** \$592,000

**Potential Total Cost per Household:** \$8,000 (approx.)

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## 5. Conclusion and Requested Next Steps

The Skana Water District community has clearly indicated that the current CRD proposal to replace steel tanks does not align with local fiscal realities or community priorities. A poly tank system offers a technically sound, financially responsible, and future-flexible alternative that better addresses climate uncertainty, site constraints, and long-term resilience.

SWD respectfully requests that the CRD:

1. Formally pursue the poly tank option in collaboration with the SWD board.
2. Consider the phased implementation plan outlined in this document; and
3. Work collaboratively with community representatives to refine cost estimates and confirm technical requirements.

The Skana Water District remains committed to supporting a timely, cooperative, and fiscally responsible solution that serves current residents while preserving flexibility for future generations.