

E-mail January 25, 2010.

From:

Honourable Shirley Bond
Minister of Transportation
Province of British Columbia
BOX 9055 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, B.C., V8W 9E2

184265 - Texada Gravel

Dear Nicholas:

Thank you for your e-mail of November 3, 2009, and attachments, regarding your continued concerns over the use of Texada gravel on Gabriola Island. Please accept my apologies for the lateness of this reply.

You may be interested to know that Texada Gravel has also been used on other Gulf Island roads and my ministry has received positive feedback about the performance of this product from other areas.

That said, I recognize that residents of Gabriola Island have concerns about the use of this material and in response my ministry has decided to limit the application of Texada gravel on Gabriola Island's roads. During the winter period, our local maintenance contractor, Emcon Services Ltd., will use a different material to fill potholes and will schedule grading during drier periods to address the conditions you note.

If you have further questions about this matter, please don't hesitate to contact my ministry's local Operations Manager, Jim Symington. He can be reached by telephone at 250 751-7136 or by e-mail at Jim.Symington@gov.bc.ca, and would be pleased to assist you further.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Sincerely,
Shirley Bond
Minister

Copy to: Jim Symington, Operations Manager
Vancouver Island District

My immediate response:

E-mail January 25, 2010

Dear Minister

I thank you for your reply but consider it a very inadequate response to my concerns as detailed below.

I am of course very much aware that the gravel is used on other Gulf Islands and went to Denman Island to investigate this. A [copy of my detailed findings](#) is attached. The reason why the gravel is deemed satisfactory on Denman Island is that it is NOT the same material as is being used on Gabriola.

This [the Emcon Services solution] has already been tried and is an inadequate response. I refer to you to the letter below as an example of this.

Sincerely

Letter published in the Flying Shingle, Thursday, November 19 2009

Goo gulps good gravel on Canso Rd.
by Kees and Donnie Groot
Thursday, November 19 2009

Dear Editor,

We are often asked what has been done about the condition of Canso Road. An update follows and from our perspective the problem has not been adequately solved.

Firstly we will say, we did buy a home on a gravel road, we did that willingly, perhaps hoping that sometime in the future it would be paved but not expecting that to be done at any specific time. What we did not expect was that the maintenance of our road would become such an issue.

As promised at our meeting with Highways and EMCON nearly two years ago, some gravel and sand was spread on Canso. However it is apparent a few loads of gravel alone are not going to correct the problem.

Texada slime is such a gooey mass that as soon as it rains the gravel is just absorbed into the goo. The proportion of goo is so much greater than gravel that the goo wins. If it is dry we have a hard compacted surface, but now that it is raining the water is being absorbed into the slime and once again the potholes are forming in the same places they were two years ago. We expect the potholes will soon be as deep as they were previously. Last winter the road became a sorry mess but it was not as bad as it had been because of so little rain; now the condition is quickly deteriorating much to the concern of the residents and the horror of our visitors who cannot believe that we live on such a dreadful road.

Think of mortar. That is what the base of our road is really composed of. Mortar is great when you are building a brick wall but it is not acceptable as a road base.

To exacerbate the problem, we have heavy dump trucks going back and forth daily. To support that kind of usage you must have a heavy duty foundation.

We have just returned from a walk on the road and to be honest, there have been some improvements: as a pedestrian, you no longer slide off the road in the slippery slime, the road is quite hard and sandy underfoot, the road has been crowned and as mentioned above, some sand and gravel has been spread and graded. But now there is virtually no gravel in sight, it has all been swallowed by the slime. At least that has helped reduce the gooey consistency but once again, unless the gremlins are digging their way to China, the potholes are quickly developing.

Highways MUST remember they are and have been the ones who have the final say in any subdivision application and if the zoning is open to allow the kind of usage our road takes then they ultimately should and must be responsible for the quality of road they provide. Isn't Highways responsible to serve communities and communicate with them to solve ensuing problems?

In our minds the only solution is to remove all the Texada slime that they dumped over the past few years and begin from scratch by building a proper road base that will support the traffic that uses the road. In the meantime our cars are suffering from both caustic coatings of dust and slime and the continuous onslaught of potholes, our dogs are suffering from burned feet from the chemical reaction of the slime, our clothes are suffering and we must be suffering from the fine dust particles that we continually bring in to our homes on our feet and clothing.

In conclusion, the road has been worked on but is not satisfactory and it is not holding up over time. We are fed up and feel rather frustrated. A group of us met with Highways and EMCON two years ago. There were to be frequent follow-up meetings, but they have been few and far between and here we are still in the same predicament!! We understand that the other gravel, or should I say slime, roads on Gabriola are in no better condition.
