



Date: October 14, 1998

**TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation**  
**FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation**  
**SUBJECT: FRASER RIVER DEBRIS TRAP**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the Park Board advise the Province of the serious consequences of withdrawing funding of \$180,000 for the operation of the Fraser River Debris Trap, and request the Province consider other options to continue the operation of the Fraser River Debris Trap.**

## **BACKGROUND**

In August 1998, it was reported that the Ministry of Forests was withdrawing funding for the Fraser River Debris Trap. The trap is located on the Fraser River between Agassiz and Hope. Its function is to trap floating debris that otherwise would foul the lower Fraser River and Georgia Strait.

The trap is managed by the Debris Management Board, whose members include representatives from the Federal Government, the Provincial Government and private industry. Funding for the operation of the trap is split equally (i.e. \$180,000 each) among the three participants. The announcement by the Ministry of Forests to withdraw its share of funding puts the future of the trap in jeopardy. If debris is allowed to float down the Fraser unabated, Vancouver's beaches will undoubtedly be affected.

## **DISCUSSION**

The annual Park Board budget for cleaning and disposing of beach debris is currently \$153,000 per year. While there is no way of knowing exactly what the impact will be if the debris trap shuts down, there will undoubtedly be more debris floating in the Georgia Strait. If 5% of the 50- to 90 thousand cubic metres of debris caught annually in the debris trap makes its way to Vancouver beaches, Park Board beach maintenance costs could increase two to three times to continue to maintain clean beaches.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Federal Government, Provincial Government, and private industry have a responsibility to the ongoing operation of the Fraser River Debris Trap. Prior to any of these groups withdrawing funding, the stakeholders affected by the decision should have an opportunity to discuss alternate strategies.

Prepared by:

Environment and Operations division  
Board of Parks and recreation  
City of Vancouver  
BM:hw

