

VICTORIA HARBOUR DEFENCE ALLIANCE (VHDA)
NEWS RELEASE – For Immediate Release
Lands Ministry sends bogus reply to former Victoria Mayor

Former 4-term Mayor Peter Pollen, a staunch contributor to the enhancement of Victoria Harbour, who heads VHDA, a group of citizens concerned about a proposed mega yacht storage marina, was sent a bogus letter by the Provincial Lands Bureau. Pollen wrote to Lands Minister Steve Thompson requesting responses to a series of questions concerning the province's offer of a 45 year marina lease to the developer. -

Why has the province offered to lease out a public water lot, used daily by the public, without an environmental impact review and a proper analysis of the developer's business plan? Why has it disregarded a public petition with 7,000 signatures opposing the project and totally failed to meet the criteria of public transparency, consultation, benefit and accountability required before leasing any Crown Land? The 45 year lease was hatched in total secrecy, why is the Ministry thumbing its' nose at Victoria's citizens?

In response to the letter Pollen received a strange "fluff" reply signed by Bonita Wallace, a functionary in the Ministry's Land Bureau, which not only totally failed to address the specific questions, but veered off into areas not addressed by Pollen. It soon became apparent the Minister's "reply" was not responding to Pollen at all. It was in fact a bogus reply, a carbon copy of an old letter sent to someone else by a different official and simply regurgitated and signed by Wallace. Is this the Minister's idea of public accountability?

For Pollen the bogus response typifies the obfuscation and shady practices within the Land Bureau, where errors, improprieties and a cozy relationship with the developer have become endemic and completely eclipsed the Bureau's responsibility to ensure public transparency and accountability. Pollen believes a concerned public is entitled to answers on this issue, not secrecy, arrogance and contempt! In a follow up letter again requesting answers, the VHDA group suggests it's time for Thompson to "Clean out the stables" in the Land Bureau, put a stop to efforts to stall and manipulate the public, and provide proper answers and accountability. Victorians should be concerned a month has gone by and there are still no answers from the Minister.

The VHDA letters and the Land Bureau's original and bogus letters are attached.

Contact Peter Pollen 250 595 3470