

Tsunami warning shows fractured region

Here in Greater Victoria, most of us learned about the tsunami warning hours after it was cancelled.

One cannot imagine a more inefficient and ineffective disaster-response system that serves our medium-sized “city” of 360,000, but which in reality is 13 separate municipal governments with 91 mayors and councillors, plus 23 appointed Capital Regional District board members.

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Each municipality has its own emergency management plan (13 in all plus the CRD plan) as required by the province. We have 13 mayors (or designates) with the authority to activate the emergency plans within their jurisdictions. We have 13 fire departments and seven police agencies, each with their own command-and-control structure. And it is the (lack of) co-ordination among these plans that is most worrisome and should keep us awake at night.

All this, for an area 2.5 times the size of Salt Spring Island.

It seems it will take a major loss of life and a crisis of major proportions to convince the province that the fractured, parochial governance model here in “Victoria” is failing us on this and every other level.

Lesley Ewing

Oak Bay

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