

# Victorians believe better is possible

Re: “B.C. rules out amalgamating region, eyes more sharing,” Aug. 13.

I was heartened to read that the province has no immediate plans to consider amalgamating the capital region. To move forward without extensive data, citizen education and community input would be nonsensical.

What did surprise me is the reticence from the minister, Selina Robinson, to fund a comprehensive, citizen-involved, regional-governance review. How can Robinson even comment on potential solutions without a solid understanding of the status quo?

Accountability of the Capital Regional District and other regional boards such as B.C. Transit is almost non-existent.

That is not to say that the CRD is unnecessary, but Robinson needs to understand that it is grossly unaccountable to the voter. The current structure of these boards fosters unhealthy inter-municipal competition and creates public mistrust. It can also lead to parochial and unco-operative administrations.

Further, without the data from a regional-governance review, it is unlikely that the minister is aware of the magnitude of the conflicts of interest that are a direct result of our ad hoc style of regional governance. We need to identify the issues and stop the bleeding. We need a mature, thoughtful and transparent dialogue with the bureaucracies, the municipalities, our elected officials, large and small businesses, and the residents of our region.

The citizens of our beloved region believe strongly that “better is possible” and we look to the province for leadership. This requires leadership from Robinson and a relatively small but wise investment from the province now.

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Victoria