

Local government is doing fine

Re: "Province's local-government systems need an overhaul," June 16.

The argument for reform of B.C.'s local government system and for municipal amalgamations suffers from three fatal omissions and a focus on irrelevant facts.

First, there is no mention that for more than 50 years, B.C.'s 27 regional districts have been providing services on a region-wide, basis such as parks and 911, and inter-municipal such as sewer, water and recycling.

Regional districts are composed of the various municipalities and rural areas in their region. The focus on the number of municipalities in the Capital Regional District is irrelevant. As the second most populous region in B.C., we have 13 municipalities.

The Lower Mainland, as the most populous region, has 21 municipalities in the Metro Vancouver regional district.

Second, the article avoids analysis of the history of amalgamations in Canada. They usually resulted in increased costs, higher taxes, poorer service delivery, a larger bureaucracy and a larger elected council. They often are not familiar with the local neighbourhoods their decisions affect.

Our system of local municipalities within a regional district provides us with both knowledgeable local decision-making and effective regional services at a reasonable cost. Finally, town-hall meeting issues mentioned, including local environmental issues, are within the current authority of local and regional government to address without the need for restructuring the whole system.

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