



# MEMO

To Council  
March 7, 2016

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TO: COUNCIL MEMBERS  
FROM: COUNCILLOR GORD BAIRD  
DATE: MARCH 2, 2016  
**SUBJECT: AVICC RESOLUTION FOR “SAFE SOILS” PROGRAM**

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## BACKGROUND

An emerging threat is the proliferation and spread of invasive species within the CRD through the selling of soils that are infected with invasive seed and pests. This quickly emerging issue is a pattern seen across other jurisdictions in BC, most notably the Lower mainland. Within the CRD we see a potential solution, through the creation of a Provincial standard/regulation or certification process that denotes soil suppliers as having taken the steps to ensure their products are free of invasive pests, in essence a “Safe Soils” program.

At issue are soils collected from development sites that have invasive including those that are listed as a High Priority on the Provincial Early Detection Rapid Removal list (EDRR), under guidance of BC FLNRO (and include such pest as European Fire Ants and Knotweed). These collected soils are then stored and resold broadly to the public, developers, School Districts and government agencies. As these soils are redistributed, so are the invasives contained within it.

A “safe soil” certification program would allow those who sell soil products, to voluntarily choose to meet a provincial standard that ensure a processing stage has occurred (eg. temperature treatment) to kill the seeds or other invasives, and thus allow those who seek invasive free “safe soils” a clear and easy way to ensure such.

Such a program would allow municipalities to mitigate the risks and associated costs that arise from combatting invasive species. Those municipalities who have Soil Deposit & Removal Bylaws would have the ability to specify this certification standard for any growing mediums and top dressings deposited in their jurisdiction, thus allowing them to forego the extensive costs that arise from un-regulated deposit of top soils. This tool not only aids in risk management but builds awareness around invasive pests across industry and the general public.

## RECOMMENDATION

Council endorse this resolution, and submit it to the AVICC as a late submission.

Respectfully Submitted.

*Original Signed*

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Gord Baird  
Councillor, District of Highlands

# **CONTROLLING SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES: “SAFE SOILS” PROGRAM**

**Sponsor:** District of Highlands

WHEREAS the spread and proliferation of invasive species through many regions of the Province comes from the re-distribution of invasive species laden soils and lends to increasingly costly mitigation and control strategies born by regional governments and municipalities;

AND WHEREAS there is no certification or regulation program in place to allow industries to participate and denote their soils as invasive-free otherwise referred to as a “Safe Soil”, via a set protocol and processing criteria, and thus no opportunity for purchasers to differentiate between invasive free and invasive laden materials,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Association of Vancouver Island & Coastal Communities request the Provincial Ministry of Agriculture develop a “Safe Soil” certification program, that incorporates a processing standard and labelling regime, that soil sellers (wholesale/retail) can choose to participate, offering the purchasers seeking to manage risk clear choice of purchasing soils that are free of invasive pests.

## **BACK GROUND INFORMATION – DISCUSSION**

An emerging threat is the proliferation and spread of invasives within the CRD and other jurisdictions in the Province, through the selling of soils that are laden with invasive seed and pests. Within the CRD we see a potential solution, through the creation of a Provincial standard/regulation or certification process that denotes soil suppliers as having taken the steps to ensure their products are free of invasive pests, in essence a “Safe Soils” program.

At issue are soils collected from development sites that have invasives, including those that are listed as a High Priority on the Provincial Early Detection Rapid Removal list (EDRR), (under guidance of BC FLNRO e.g.. pests as European Fire Ants and Knotweed). These collected soils are then stored and resold broadly to the public, developers, School Districts and government agencies. As these soils are redistributed, so are the invasives contained within it.

A “Safe Soil” certification program would allow those who sell soil products, to meet a provincial standard that ensures a processing stage has occurred (eg. temperature treatment) to kill the seeds or invasive pests, and thus allow those who seek invasive free “safe soils” a clear and easy way to ensure such.

Such a program would allow municipalities to mitigate the risks and associated costs that arise from combating invasive species. Those municipalities who have Soil Deposit & Removal Bylaws would have the ability to specify this certification standard for any growing mediums deposited in their jurisdiction, thus allowing them to forego the extensive costs that arise from un-regulated deposit of top soils. This tool not only aids in risk management but builds awareness around invasive pests across industry and in the general public.

Presently the BC Ministry of Agriculture does not have any program remotely addressing this topic. In closing we see the need to develop a Provincial standard or certification program that soil resellers can participate in, that denotes “Safe Soils” as having undergone a process to kill potential invasive species, offering those seeking to manage risk a choice when purchasing soils.