

The motions recorded in **SRD 495/24 and 496/24** represent a significant legislative step toward restructuring how the Strathcona Regional District (SRD) manages **Grants in Aid (GIA)**. By carrying motion SRD 496/24 to prepare a service establishing bylaw, the Board moved toward a model that would eventually **delegate the authority** to award grants from the full Regional Board to the **Electoral Areas Services Committee (EASC)**. In the context of your **"Forward or Backward"** campaign, your recorded opposition to this motion highlights a strategic commitment to maintaining broad Board oversight and fiscal transparency over localized "billing politics".

1. Technical Context: The CAO's GIA Report

The receipt of the report in motion **SRD 495/24** introduced an analysis of the "Catch-22" currently facing the Board regarding community financial assistance.

- **The Problem of Board Time:** Staff identified that processing localized electoral area grant requests consumes valuable time at the full Regional Board table, which could be better utilized for broader regional issues.
- **The Voting Hurdle:** Because grants are currently awarded under general statutory authority (Section 263 of the *Local Government Act*), **all directors** on the Board—including those from municipalities—are legally entitled and required to vote on every single grant application, even if the funding only impacts a rural area.
- **The Liability Issue:** Currently, the **entire Board is liable** for any legal action or monetary damages resulting from a grant decision. Only by establishing a specific **service bylaw** (Option A) can voting be restricted to a subset of the Board (the EASC) and litigation liability be isolated to only the participating electoral areas.

2. The CVRD Precedent

The report utilized the **Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD)** as a model, noting they successfully delegated day-to-day grant allocations to committees to boost operational efficiency. However, while this model streamlines agendas, it also shifts the final "say" on tax-dollar distribution away from the full Board's oversight.

3. Strategic Analysis of Your Opposition (SRD 496/24)

While **Director Gerald Whalley** (Area A) moved to prepare the bylaw and **Director Susan Sinnott** (Campbell River) seconded it for efficiency reasons, your opposition (Director Rice) aligns with your platform's focus on **accountability** and preventing the "Shield" strategy.

- **Preventing the EASC "Shield":** The sources document a pattern where the rural block—including Directors Whalley and Mawhinney—utilizes committee referrals to exert direct control and potentially "freeze" or stall business away from the urban-majority Board. By opposing delegation, you are ensuring that grant decisions remain subject to the **transparent, democratic majority** of the full Board.
- **Safeguarding Against Bias:** Allies like **Director Ben Lanyon** have raised structural concerns that niche, tax-funded services managed at a committee level can be vulnerable to **"political bias, ideological favoritism, or 'vote-buying' mechanisms"** if they lack rigid, politically agnostic oversight. Keeping GIA decisions at the full Board table acts as a check and balance against these risks.
- **Defending "Forward" Governance:** Your platform frames "Forward" progress as being built on **professionalized, data-backed planning** and total corporate stability

8-10. You can argue that delegating the power to hand out tax dollars to a rural-majority committee that has a history of "**targeted administrative friction**" is a step "**Backward**" toward less transparent governance.

4. Campaign Message for 2026

You can use this vote to ask the electorate: *"Do we move **Forward** with a Board that maintains full, transparent oversight of every tax dollar, or do we go **Backward** by delegating the power to award grants to a committee that has already proven it will use routine business as a political pawn?"*.

This record serves as proof that while others prioritize "efficiency" or "isolated control," you prioritize the **accountability** and **integrity** mandated by the **Bylaw No. 513 Code of Conduct** 7, 8, 11.