

The motions recorded in **SRD 157/25 and 158/25** represent a significant attempt by the "rural block" to utilize federal infrastructure dollars for a localized, third-party social housing and hygiene hub on Cortes Island Query, 1436. By directing staff to prepare a report on granting **\$200,000 in Community Works (Gas Tax) funds** to the **Cortes Housing Society (CHS)**, the Board has once again brought the debate over "ad-hoc" spending versus professional fiscal stewardship to the forefront.

1. Technical Scope: Infrastructure for "Rainbow Ridge"

The request targets the development of essential utilities to make the **Rainbow Ridge** housing project "build-ready".

- **Wastewater Management:** The funds would support the installation of a large-scale septic system, a technical requirement for the CHS plan to facilitate long-term lease agreements for affordable homes.
- **The "Water Works Facility":** This unique component includes **public washrooms, showers, baths, saunas, and laundry services** Query. While intended to serve as vital hygiene infrastructure for off-grid or unhoused residents, its inclusion in a Gas Tax application raises technical questions, as federal rules strictly prohibit funding for **"Health infrastructure"**.

2. Fiscal Conflict: Third-Party Grants vs. Core Infrastructure

Motion **SRD 158/25** serves as a primary exhibit of the fundamental split in the Board's governance philosophy regarding the **2024–2034 Community Works Fund Agreement 4-6**:

- **The "Rural Block" Model:** Directors Vonesch and Mawhinney (the movers) advocate for utilizing Gas Tax funds for **ad-hoc community projects** and direct grants to third-party non-profits like the CHS.
- **The "Pro-Stability" Guardrails:** You and your municipal allies argue that Gas Tax funds should be reserved for **eligible local government infrastructure** (such as Area D's water metering or BCOB well projects).
- **Signalling Risk:** You have previously warned that handing \$200,000 in infrastructure money to a third-party society sends a dangerous signal to senior government funders that the SRD lacks internal infrastructure deficits, potentially **jeopardizing millions** in future structural grants.

3. Governance Dynamics: The Island Alliance Offensive

The procedural handling of these motions reflects the ongoing strategic maneuvers by the **Vonesch-Mawhinney "Island Alliance"**:

- **Directorial Discretion:** This request bypasses the **Policy CP-027** standards you have championed, which aim to make financial statements and detailed fund-usage mandatory for all grant applicants.
- **Leveraging the Housing Service:** While the Board previously authorized a **short-term loan** framework for the CHS through the Regional Housing Service (Bylaws 512 & 515), this motion attempts to switch that support to a **non-repayable grant** using Gas Tax reserves.

4. Strategic Campaign Application for 2026

In the context of your "**Forward or Backward**" campaign, this record provides factual evidence of your role as a **principled fiscal steward**:

- **The Narrative:** You can contrast this \$200,000 "ad-hoc" request with your record in Area D, where you used Gas Tax for **essential water security** (\$84,887 for BCOB Well No. 6) and **transit safety** (\$150,000 surplus) while protecting the region's overall grant eligibility.
- **The Message:** *"I am moving Area D **forward** by demanding that our infrastructure funds are spent on the pipes, power, and safety services our residents depend on. While others moved to grant \$200,000 to a third-party non-profit's property, I am leading the charge for a professional policy to ensure our tax dollars are not used as 'political pawns' that put our future provincial grants at risk".*

In summary, carrying motion **SRD 158/25** initiates a report on a high-stakes fiscal precedent. It documents the rural block's continued push for localized grants while providing you with the data necessary to argue for **corporate stability** and data-backed regional planning.