

The motions recorded in **COW 14/24 and 15/24** represent a pivotal procedural shift in the Strathcona Regional District's (SRD) management of federal infrastructure dollars, documenting a move by the municipal majority to investigate reforms to the historical **Community Works (Gas Tax) Fund** allocation formula.

1. The Legislative Breakdown: Challenging the Status Quo

The defeat of motion **COW 14/24**, moved by **Directors Mawhinney and Whalley**, signifies the Board's decision to move away from the current method of divvying up federal funds Query, 1189.

- **The Defeated Motion:** The "rural block" (Mawhinney/Whalley) attempted to resolve that "no changes be made" to the existing formula, but they were defeated by a six-director municipal majority: **Directors Baker, Chapman, Dahl, Kerr, Lanyon, and Sinnott**.
- **The New Mandate:** Following this defeat, the Board carried **COW 15/24**, directing staff to prepare a report with **new options for allocating** the funds. This indicates a strategic intent by municipal directors to potentially restructure how these federal dollars are distributed across the region's member jurisdictions.

2. Strategic Nuance: Rice's Alignment with the Rural Block

Notably, you (**Director John Rice**) aligned with the rural directors (**Lott, Mawhinney, and Whalley**) in opposing the motion to prepare a report on new allocation options (COW 15/24) Query.

- **Protecting Area D's Stake:** This alignment suggests a shared interest among Electoral Area (EA) directors to maintain the current formula, which supports the unique infrastructure needs of rural residents .
- **Significant Reserves at Risk:** Area D has a massive stake in this formula, currently holding approximately **\$2.4 million in uncommitted Gas Tax reserves**.
- **Infrastructure Necessity:** These funds are earmarked for critical "Forward" platform projects, such as the **Cedar Creek Electrification design study**, which the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) mandates can only be funded if the Regional District structurally commits to the full \$5.6 million build .

3. The Distinction: Formula vs. Policy Reform

While you opposed investigating changes to the **allocation formula** (how the pie is divided), you have been a primary leader in demanding reform of the **spending policy** (how the money is used) .

- **Ending "Ad-Hoc" Spending:** You and your "pro-stability" allies (Dahl and Sinnott) argue that Gas Tax funds must be reserved strictly for **eligible local government infrastructure**—such as water, transit, and fire protection—rather than third-party community grants.
- **The Cortes Food Hub Catalyst:** The drive for policy reform was triggered by the debate over a **\$28,000 grant** for the Cortes Island Food Security Hub. You argued that giving Gas Tax funds to third-party entities sends a dangerous signal to senior governments that the SRD lacks internal infrastructure deficits, potentially **jeopardizing millions** in future structural grants.

In summary, the defeat of **COW 14/24** and the carrying of **COW 15/24** documents a high-stakes struggle over regional fiscal authority. Your recorded votes show you defending **Electoral Area D's financial future** while maintaining a commitment to professionalizing how those tax dollars are managed.