REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO

NEWS RELEASE

November 17, 2026

Grant Awarded for the Surfside Water Quality Improvement Project

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) is pleased to announce a grant of up to $508,220 from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities through its Green Municipal Fund's Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation (LLCA) initiative. The funding will support the RDN's Surfside Water Quality Improvement Project. LLCA is a $530-million initiative funded through the Government of Canada's Adaptation Action Plan and National Adaptation Strategy to help municipalities across Canada build long-term climate resilience.

Protecting coastal groundwater from saltwater intrusion is essential, as elevated salinity in the water supply can result in long-term impacts that are difficult to reverse. The project will help reduce rising salt levels in the groundwater serving the Surfside Water Service Area, north of Qualicum Beach along Surfside Drive and part of McFeely Drive. Once complete, the improvements will help ensure the drinking water quality continues to meet the Canadian Drinking Water Guidelines.

Two shallow wells located near the Little Qualicum River Estuary currently supply potable water to this service area and both wells are highly vulnerable to seawater intrusion. The project, which began in the fall 2026, involves drilling one test well and one production well, and installing transmission main, power and control infrastructure to bring the new production well into operation. Drilling a new well farther inland, where the aquifer is thicker and the risk of saltwater entering the water supply is low, will allow the RDN to reduce use of these existing wells or temporarily shut them down.

Information Session

Residents are invited to an information session to learn about the project timeline and other information.

Date: Thursday, November 26
Time: 4 to 6 p.m.
Location: Little Qualicum Hall, 1210 Centre Rd, Qualicum Beach

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities grant covers 70 per cent of the project costs. The remaining $339,118 will be funded through the RDN and Electoral Area G Community Works Funds as well as an in-kind contribution ($85,000 value) from the Town of Qualicum Beach which includes project data support. As these two sources cover the full project costs, there are no tax implications for Surfside Water Service Area residents for this project.

For more information on the Surfside Water Service Area, please visit rdn.ca/surfside. To learn about the Green Municipal Fund, visit https://fcm.ca.

Quotes

"Thank you to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Government of Canada for the funding support to help protect drinking water for the community served by the Surfside Water Service Area. By adding a new well farther inland, we can reduce reliance on wells vulnerable to seawater intrusion and help protect the quality of the water residents rely on for years to come."
- *Lehann Wallace, Electoral Area G Director*

"This funding will help the Regional District of Nanaimo advance important climate preparedness efforts that protect residents, strengthen local infrastructure, and build resilience to future climate impacts. By investing in preparedness today, communities can reduce the long-term costs of disasters and recovery while creating a stronger future for residents. FCM is proud to partner with the Government of Canada in supporting municipalities as they take action to protect the people and places they serve."
- *Tim Tierney, President, Federation of Canadian Municipalities*

"Municipalities are on the front lines of dealing with the realities of climate impacts, like flooding and extreme heat. Through the Local Leadership for Climate Adaptation initiative (LLCA), the federal government is supporting communities, so they are equipped with the tools they need to best meet their needs. By supporting communities like the Regional District of Nanaimo, communities will protect coastal groundwater, to ensure they are able to thrive - no matter what extreme weather may come their way."
- *The Honourable Julie Dabrusin, Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature*

Key Points

- The project will improve long-term drinking water quality for the Surfside Water Service Area.
- A new inland production well will help reduce the risk of seawater intrusion into the groundwater supply.
- Grant and Community Works funding will cover the full project cost, with no tax impact for residents.

Quick Fact

- Surfside Water Service Area was established in 1986 and serves 39 households.

About FCM's Green Municipal Fund

FCM's Green Municipal Fund (GMF) is a globally unique organization that leverages investments from the Government of Canada to provide funding and education to municipalities, helping them both reach net-zero and build resilient communities, while also delivering economic and social benefits such as jobs, housing and infrastructure. Since inception in 2000, it has helped reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 3.02 million tonnes, funded nearly 60,000 person-years of employment and contributed $5.6 billion to the national GDP via the more than 2,850 approved projects. GMF manages approximately $2.4 billion in programs funded by the Government of Canada.

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