

Small Group Meeting Summary: Biogas Producers

Food Sector Grease Interceptor Bylaw Review

Meeting Date: October 19, 2018

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1. Background

Metro Vancouver, in an effort to reduce the amount of fats, oils and grease entering the sewer system, is engaging food sector establishments and related stakeholders to obtain feedback on a review of the Food Sector Grease Interceptor Bylaw (the bylaw).

Specific areas of interest and exploration included:

- Effectiveness of the current bylaw
- Challenges associated with meeting bylaw requirements
- Educational initiatives that might improve awareness, understanding and compliance with the bylaw

Metro Vancouver recognizes that changes to the Food Sector Grease Interceptor Bylaw (the bylaw) could have an impact on stakeholders and is committed to delivering a responsive, transparent stakeholder engagement program. A variety of forums are being used to learn about stakeholder issues and interests related to the bylaw. Information collected during the engagement period will inform the bylaw review. Results and recommendations will be reported back to stakeholders and the Utilities Committee and Greater Vancouver Sewerage & Drainage District (GVS&DD) Board at the end of the process.

Small Group Meetings are being hosted to support a discussion of factors inhibiting compliance and the special considerations of stakeholder groups with unique interests or characteristics.

2. Notification

In August 2018, Metro Vancouver issued invitations to engage in the bylaw review, by email and post, to over 10,000 Food Sector Establishments and other stakeholders within Metro Vancouver. Invited stakeholders responded to Metro Vancouver by email to confirm their interest. Those confirming their interest and availability were assigned to the appropriate stakeholder meeting.

3. Small Group Meeting

Date & Location

Friday, October 19, 9:00 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

Metro Vancouver – 28th Floor Conference Centre
Metrotower Office Complex
4730 Kingsway
Burnaby

Participants

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Brendan Van Biert	Fraser Valley Biogas
Jared Girman	West Coast Reduction / Redux (grease trap services)
Howard Tam	West Coast Reduction
Scott Gramm	Fortis BC, Renewable Natural Gas (unable to attend meeting; provided email comments)

Presenters & Support

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Tom Sadleir	Program Manager, Public Involvement, Metro Vancouver
Linda Parkinson	Program Manager, Source Control Utility & Planning, Metro Vancouver
Marlene Fuhrmann	Permitting Specialist, Environmental Regulation and Enforcement, Metro Vancouver
Galen Aker	Communications Coordinator, Lucent Quay (Recorder)

4. Presentation

Metro Vancouver presented the following to provide context for the bylaw review:

Engagement Process – Tom Sadleir

- Purpose of the bylaw review
- Engagement objectives
- Timeline

Background – Linda Parkinson

- Metro Vancouver management of the region's wastewater
- Metro Vancouver's Source Control Program
- Effects of fats, oils and grease on infrastructure
- Description of current bylaw

Bylaw Enforcement – Marlene Fuhrmann

- Working with municipalities to identify “hot spots”
- Inspections to date
- Common violations
- Fees

5. Feedback

A series of discussion topics were used to obtain feedback on the bylaw review. The following lays out the comments and questions that were raised at the meeting.

Topic 1

How does your industry use Grease Interceptor waste (Fats, Oil and Grease)?

What specific type/quality of Fats, Oil and Grease is used by your industry?

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- [Fortis] With respect to our Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) program, it is important that Metro Vancouver understands that we see any organic waste as a potential source of biogas (which once purified is biomethane or RNG). Therefore, our end goal would be to maximize use of any organic waste (such as grease from traps) to create RNG.
 - Do residences create the grease problem? Are they a greater problem than commercial kitchens? Do you have any stats? Not all high rises have grease interceptors.
 - We [West Coast Reduction - Redux] have installed a grease interceptor for the restaurants and an additional one for the offices in the building on the corner of Cambie and Broadway. This could be a case study on the use of grease interceptors in mixed-use buildings.
 - We [West Coast Reduction - WCR] have two lines of business for oil/grease: used cooking oil and grease trap product. Used cooking oil is a much cleaner product and goes directly into pet food or biofuels that we ship to energy producers. We are looking to expand to other energy clients. For grease traps, we haul the product back to our facility and de-water it. We ship the raw material to a company to make bio-diesel, which is filtered into renewable natural gas. We are looking to separate the product even further, as only about 5-7% is usable grease, because of the high water content. The product also contains a lot of used food particulate, which is hard to separate.
 - We [WCR] entered this sector (grease interceptor servicing) because of the introduction of this bylaw. The bylaw is essential as without it, what is the incentive for a food sector establishment to maintain their grease trap? We have approximately 2,000 restaurant customers who are now properly maintained.. We have a fleet of trucks under a subsidiary brand and we also work in Alberta.
 - Our [WCR] core business is meat waste..
 - We [Fraser Valley Biogas] work closely with companies who collect grease trap grease when the product is clean, dewatered and has good value (water has no gas value). We are currently getting grease trap product from Kelowna due to the lack of processing facilities there. It is good for sustainability and the environment, therefore we are looking to see how far it will be legislated

and how much volume might come through. We are currently close to capacity and can take 11,000 tonnes per year. We are looking at tripling capacity by building two more digesters.

- The second part of our [Fraser Valley Biogas] expansion will be adding a macerator to deal with food particles. A driver for what we are allowed to take is if it can be repurposed to agricultural land. Our waste products serve as fertilizer for approximately 2,500 acres of agricultural land outside of Metro Vancouver. We also take waste from Surrey biofuel.
- Based on what is being collected, I believe regulation has done a lot to reduce grease in the system. We [WCR] are more of a premium service and our prices reflect that. We push clients to comply with bylaws and we maintain a fleet of 150 trucks. We have success with larger clients but are less successful with smaller operations due to the cost to them. We are pretty close to capacity but will scale up, as appropriate.
- It is our observation that large establishments are adhering to the bylaw. The focus should be on smaller food service establishments that are risking not spending money on maintaining their trap.

Topic 2

Is there interest in capturing a larger amount of Fats, Oil and Grease from FSEs, thereby diverting it from the waste water system?

How can your industry partner with Metro Vancouver to improve access to Fats, Oil and Grease from FSEs?

Are you aware of/familiar with any new technologies that enhance the capture of different types of Fats, Oil and Grease?

Topic 3

What can be done to incentivise FSEs to install and maintain a GI so as to keep Fats, Oil and Grease out of the waste water system?

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- [Fortis] Provided that someone can use the waste to ultimately produce energy (in the form of gas) Fortis would have an opportunity to grow the RNG program. This is good for our customers and good for the province as RNG displaces conventional natural gas and lowers emissions of the existing gas system.
 - There needs to be pressure on business owners to use a reputable service provider. Some owners decide based on price, language, or the desire to work with a premium provider. There must be a way to identify reputable providers.
 - As a service provider, I [WCR] don't make assumptions about which places will or will not want to pay for premium service.
 - A guiding document for the restaurants on what to expect from haulers would be beneficial. When this began, businesses were not maintaining their interceptors. We [WCR] utilize before and after photos and service reports. We estimate the level of fats, oils and grease. The goal is to comply with the bylaw and provide record keeping.
 - We [WCR] provide online record keeping for our clients. Clients can log on to the customer site to view all services and reports. This system requires significant maintenance.

- Market the bylaw from a green standpoint. Promote awareness that fats, oils and grease are going towards renewable energy. Competition for the “greenest city”.
- Marketing can only go so far. Most of the large establishments are abiding while the small operations are struggling with the cost.
- There are no new designs for grease traps. Some people use chemicals but they don’t work. Grease removal devices have had little success in collecting grease.
- Current grease traps are simple, cheap and they work. Soaps, cleaners etc. are very detrimental to our facility.
- The traps we [WCR] maintain are in better shape than 10 years ago. It’s hard to say if the format of the grease has changed in that time.
- Hard to enforce without more inspectors.
- [WCR] has expanded grease trap business to Calgary and Edmonton.
- We [WCR] are not a part of any preferred hauler program. In the past we have utilized City of Vancouver staff to approach food sector establishments.
- Using a city-approved hauler program would still be a huge expense for food sector establishments. Can Metro Vancouver provide tax incentives?
- Getting to grease interceptors can be difficult depending on the installation location. Frequency of maintenance is a big deal for customers and us. The longer grease interceptors are left unmaintained the harder the job and the more expensive it is.
- We [WCR] determine price based on volume, accessibility/time, scale, and frequency. More frequent pump outs lead to lower costs.
- Some establishments like coffee shops are pumping out weekly because of the type of products entering the trap and having several undersized traps. The hours of operation can be a challenge. They don’t want their traps being maintained with hoses during busy periods of the day.
- Very often there are space restrictions which eliminate the option to just upsize the interceptor rather than haul it away weekly / monthly.
- What businesses fall under the grease trap bylaw? Metro Vancouver should start looking at convenience stores and grocery stores as they are starting to sell more varied prepared foods.
- There is a company promoting a full service for restaurants. All food waste, fats and oils disposed into each restaurant’s on-site equipment and is made into a food slurry. Lots of oil and gas use skimming systems, technology is out there that skims off the grease and puts it into that food slurry.
- It is not likely that Fortis will ever incentivize the “food slurry” type of grease. It’s very small and we are only collecting 5-7%, so much processing required for small-scale opportunity.
- Dewatering and trucking are significant costs, reducing profit margins for the product.
- We [WCR] have best practices to clean grease interceptors and take less water but it’s nearly impossible. Drivers know the less water they take on the more stops they can work in.
- The average amount of grease we collect from the average grease trap varies by each restaurant, and maintenance of the interceptor.
- Has there been a big difference in system maintenance since the bylaw has come into effect? Do you have statistics that show the bylaw is working?
- Is the hot spots list something you would be willing to share with us? It’s something that we can target for clients and use to create a standard for the troubled areas. We could work with the haulers to address the bad areas.
- Digesters were meant to supply gas, but they operate as garbage in/garbage out. Small scale digesters are only as effective as what is fed into them.

6. Next Steps

Metro Vancouver will analyze all questions and comments from the small group meetings and identify key themes to inform the development of policy options for the Working Group, which will meet 5-6 times in 2019/20. Metro Vancouver will recruit Working Group members from the varied stakeholder groups that participated in the Small Group Meetings. The Working Group will be guided by a Terms of Reference. Smaller sub-groups could be formed to address technical or sector-specific issues.



Meeting concluded at 10:53 a.m.