



December 22, 2023

VIA EMAIL: council@esquimalt.ca

Mayor Barb Desjardins
Township of Esquimalt
1229 Esquimalt Road
Esquimalt, BC V9A 3P1

Dear Mayor Desjardins and Councillors,

The Ministry of Forests (FOR) has planned an aerial spray program to eradicate establishing spongy moth (formerly referred to as gypsy moth) populations in and around Victoria, British Columbia (B.C.). The aerial spray program is planned for the spring of 2023 and will cover a 267-hectare parcel in Esquimalt. A map is attached for your reference. There are also two additional parcels in View Royal (381 ha) and the Belmont area (341 ha).

Trapping and monitoring results from 2022 indicate spongy moth populations are establishing on Vancouver Island and require eradication. If these detections are not treated, spongy moth could establish and spread to other areas via transportation routes, and cause significant damage to the local forests, farms, orchards and urban trees, including the rare and endangered Garry Oak.

Spongy moth is not native to B.C., although it is established in eastern Canada where it causes substantial damage to deciduous forests and other vegetation. This insect is periodically introduced into communities throughout the province through the transport of goods and household items (i.e., outdoor furniture) from infested areas in the east. These periodic introductions are detected by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) which carries out an extensive pheromone-trapping program on an annual basis in high-risk areas, notably on Vancouver Island, the Gulf Islands and the Lower Mainland/Fraser Valley. The remainder of the province is surveyed at a lower intensity. The province has carried out numerous eradication projects in several areas of the province since the late 1970's. More information regarding spongy moth and the threat it poses to the ecosystems of B.C. may be found on the following MOF website: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/spongymoth>

Eradication programs are an essential component of our Long-Term North America Spongy Moth Management Plan for B.C. This ensures a "spongy moth free status" for the province, allowing continued open trade with the western U.S. states, which also remains spongy moth free.

The active ingredient of the spray is a bacterium (Btk; *Bacillus thuringiensis*) that is found naturally in soils, and it affects only the larvae of moths and butterflies that are feeding at the time of the spray. Humans,

pets, birds, bees, plants and other wildlife are not affected. The B.C. Conservation Data Centre has completed a species at risk review for the treatment area and has confirmed no listed or endangered moths or butterflies are within the treatment area.

There are three proposed applications: the first treatments will occur in late April or May 2023 (weather dependent) and then two more treatments will occur at seven- to ten-day intervals. Spray operations will be completed around 8:30 am for each spray day (three spray days in total). There are strict weather restrictions in the Pesticide Use Permit which prohibit spraying during windy conditions (maximum wind speed of 8 km/hour) to avoid spray drifting outside the permitted area. Spraying will be completed by 8:00 am over areas that include schools or daycares.

An open house will be held virtually on Tuesday, ~~December~~^{January} 24, 2023, to address any questions or concerns residents may have. All residents, schools, daycares, and care homes will be notified of the open house and will also be notified 7-10 days prior to the first spray with postcards that are mailed through Canada Post. Additionally, regular program updates will be provided on the FOR website and using street and highway signs around the treatment boundary.

Further information regarding our planned 2023 spongy moth spray eradication program and studies relating to the impact on non-target moths and human health are also available on the FOR website (<http://www.gov.bc.ca/spongymoth>).

If you have any specific questions or concerns regarding the program, please contact me directly.

Sincerely,

B Bains

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Enclosure: 2023 Esquimalt Spongy Moth Treatment Area (267 ha)

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