

ATTACHMENT A

Mayor & Council

mayor.council@nanaimo.ca

Kathy Gonzales

kathy.gonzales@nanaimo.ca

Richard Harding

richard.harding@nanaimo.ca

Lynn Wark

lynn.wark@nanaimo.ca

May 26, 2021

To Nanaimo City Council, Parks and Recreation and Aquatic Management Staff:

Re: Delayed opening of Beban Pool until 2022

We would like to acknowledge that we understand that the City of Nanaimo has had to make many difficult decisions during the pandemic and we greatly appreciate the tremendous effort that Aquatic Management put towards ensuring that Nanaimo's aquatic community had access to Nanaimo Aquatic Centre. Unfortunately, with these decisions came many unintended consequences which have resulted in the most vulnerable organizations being severely impacted. We understand that Beban Pool is not scheduled to open until 2022 for a variety of reasons. This will have a tremendous negative impact on the Nanaimo White Rapids Swim Club, especially following BC's Restart Plan announced May 25, 2021 to bring us back together.

Without access to Beban Pool, many aquatic non-profit organizations, including the White Rapids, are unable to offer programming to our youngest athletes. Without these new and young athletes for continued growth our organizations are stagnating and even worse shrinking. Some sport organizations are even at risk of folding completely. Revenue is severely affected, and costs have increased. In discussion with other aquatic users, it seems that no one has been left financially unscathed this past year and most organizations are walking a tight financial line and are only surviving based on government Covid funding programs. These programs are unlikely to be further extended and non-profits are not in a position to be able to operate while incurring large deficits. Imagine the loss to our community if Nanaimo children can no longer access Speed or Artistic Swimming opportunities.

Furthermore, there is an entire age cohort of kids that have been left out of programming for the past 15 months and these same kids will be further impacted if Beban Pool remains closed until 2022. White Rapids has been contacted by many families who have expressed concern regarding the lack of accessibility to swim programming. Learning water safety skills is not a privilege but a necessary life skill especially given Nanaimo's proximity to so many bodies of water.

The demand on NAC this past fall 2020 was substantial and every user group had to adjust their programming to be able to make things work. At the same time, it was also stressful for aquatic staff, swimmers, parents and volunteers alike. Furthermore, the competition for pool space at NAC was lower due to user groups inability to accommodate less skilled swimmers in the deep tanks of the NAC. Now that the Provincial Health Orders are beginning to lift, without Beban Pool available this fall, the demand for NAC will far exceed what is available.

We all made the best during a very long and difficult time but the changes we were forced to make to survive during the pandemic are not sustainable. It is of paramount importance that aquatic community user groups have access to Beban pool no later than the fall of this year.

We are requesting that the City of Nanaimo reconsider their decision to open Beban Pool in 2022 and to accelerate any work on upgrades to allow Beban to reopen as soon as possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate Palmer', written over a horizontal line.

Kate Palmer

President on behalf of the Nanaimo White Rapids Summer Swim Club