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19 September 2010

The Rt. Revd Richard Gagnon  
Bishop Of Victoria  
1-4044 Nelthorpe St.  
Victoria BC  
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Dear Bishop Gagnon

I am writing to you with respect to the proposed siting of a radiocommunications tower on land adjacent to a cluster of residential properties in Metchosin and on land owned by the Knights of Columbus. I attach a letter that has been sent off to Telus for your information.

My concern arises out of a conversation that I had this lunchtime with Ken Rehman, the chair of the Juan de Fuca Columbus Club which owns the land and who were approached by Telus with respect to siting their radiocommunication tower on their land. I understand that a contract has been signed to allow this to happen. It appears that no thought was given by the club to an appropriate site for the tower, instead they allowed Telus to make the decision. There was no enquiry by the club with any of the people living in residences directly affected by the placement of the tower. In my lunchtime conversation with Ken Rehman he effectively washed his hands of any involvement with the proposed site, citing that it was now all in the hands of Telus and he could do nothing. What I was asking him to do was to give an opportunity for representatives of affected residents to sit down with the club committee and listen to our concerns. He refused to even consider this. What he appears to be doing is to wash his hands of the matter and take no account of residents genuine concerns. It was hoped that having listened to these concerns the club might contact Telus and add its support to the proposal of an alternative site for the tower. All I was asking was that they, Juan de Fuca branch of the Knights of Columbus, add their voice of concern to what was being proposed by Telus. He refused to do this, effectively, as I say, washing his hands of the matter.

I was interested in the reading from today's Sunday lectionary from the book of Amos. "Hear this, you who trample upon the needy" (Amos 8:4). The word 'trample' in particular stuck a cord. Too often the powerless in our society are 'trampled' on by those who have far more power than ordinary citizens like us. It is my understanding of the Gospel that we follow one who was a voice for those who were being overlooked and marginalized. It is certainly a central strain of

the Gospel, one that the Church over the ages has tried to continue. In this dispute with Telus I feel 'trampled on' as do the families of residents in this particular part of Metchosin. I also feel that by not even considering giving moral backing the club is likely to be seen as a partner in this trampling. It's a sad reflection on fellow Christians that they, like Pilate have seemingly washed their hands of any involvement, even moral support.

I appreciate that the Juan de Fuca Columbus Club is not a part of your jurisdiction. However, It may be that a suggestion from you to them would have some effect on what they might be prepared to do, specifically in being prepared at least to talk with concerned residents as they are impacted by Telus' decision. As Bishop I assume that you may be able to exercise some moral persuasion with representatives of the club and facilitate a meeting between the interested parties.

I thank you for your attention to this letter and any assistance that you are able to give in this will be very much appreciated.

From your brother in Christ

Rev Canon Philip Wadham  
Anglican Diocese of British Columbia.